

## CONTENTS

Vol. XXVII	October 2001	No. 4
Astrology and Divine Music .....	by Kollegal R. Subramanyam .....	3
'Music Symposium - 2001' .....	An Introduction .....	5
Shanmukhananda's 'Music Symposium - 2001'		
..... A Report .....	by Janaki Krishnamoorthy & } .....	7
	Lalitha A. Bharadwaj	
'Sangita Yatra' .....	Reflections .....	
	by 'Garland N. Rajagopalan' .....	17
"Manodharma in Academic Fold" - (Hindustani Vocal) -		
	by Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas .....	23
"Nurturing Manodharma in Time-framed		
Training" - (Karnatic Vocal) ...	by Prof. T. R. Subramanian .....	25
Prof. Visweswaran .....	An Interview .....	
	by Lalitha A. Bharadwaj .....	30
Sangita Nidhi & Siksha .....	Extracts from	
	Keynote Address - by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan .....	35

IN FOCUS*Shanmukha*

*In September Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha launched on a 2-day 'Sangita Yatra' traversing the phases of Manodharma in SIKSHA and exploring the depths of SANGITA NIDHI - hidden treasures - which contained authentic and impressive source material and which could inspire the 'Sishyas in Patanavasam' and temper their lust for music off classical.*

*This issue for a major part is dedicated to the 'Yatra' with reports and reflections, a couple of papers presented and extracts from the thought-provoking Keynote Address.*

*Additionally there is "Astrology and Divine Music" by a musician who is a Vaggeyakara too, having composed "Lalitha Navavaranas"; and an interview of a participant-Vainika who 'groomed himself on the Veena based on his vocal talent'.*

*With best compliments  
from*

# allana

(Govt. Recognised Super Star Trading House)

## Allana Sons Limited

Allana House  
4, Allana Road  
Colaba  
Mumbai - 400 001.

Tel.: 287 44 55  
Fax : 204 48 21 / 204 70 02  
Web Site : <http://www.allana.com>  
E-mail : [allana@vsnl.com](mailto:allana@vsnl.com)

## ASTROLOGY AND DIVINE MUSIC

By Sangeetha Maha Mahopadhyaya  
Kollegal R. Subramanyam

Nadopasana Brahma Vidya is the name for the deity of Sangeetha Saraswathi. Gana Vidya is the essence of Vedas, Nadopasana is the nearest path for Jeevan Mukthi (Salvation). By hearing scientific and divine music, B. P. will decrease, chronic diseases will be controlled. How does this happen? What is the Miracle? Let us think about this.

In Astrology, the conjunction of planets, combination of planets will show the nature of health, wealth, prosperity and the Poorvapunya as well as sins of the previous birth. By studying a Horoscope with full of informations, possibility is there to avoid the evil effects by performing the Graha Shanthi, Graha Preethi or special pooja's and Havans. Also the Ragas have power to avoid the evil effects, if he or she sings the certain Ragas prescribed in the Sangeetha Sastra with absolute devotion, determination and concentration.

As per the Sangeetha Sastra the 72 Melakartha Ragas control the 72 important Nerves in the human body. If we sing the Ragas, studying the Lakshana of the same with Sruthi Suddha and with full devotion, the Raga Devatha showers its blessings, inject the particular nerve in the human body which will give the relief in due course and the body will be purified.

Now let us analyse Astrology in Music:

The Sapta Swaras represent the Seven Planets and the Saptha Tala Alankaras also represent the planets. Sun for Laya and the moon for Sruthi. The Sun signifies the father and Moon the mother.

Beginning from Mesha to Meena the twelve Rasis represent the 12 Sruthis. Arohana Krama starts with Simha Rasi and concludes at Makara. Avarohana Krama starts from Kumbha and concludes at Karkata.

Planetary positions in the Arohana & Avarohana Krama is as follows:

Arohana Krama : Sun-Mercury-Venus-Mars-Jupiter and Saturn.

Avarohana Krama : Saturn-Jupiter-Mars-Venus-Mercury and Moon.

Now we have to examine the Swara Sthanas and position in the Astrology.

☛ Shadjam for Ravi - Rasi Simha - Vasantha Raga for the Rasi, Bhoopala is the favourite Raga for Sun.

☛ Suddha - Chatusruthi - Shatsruthi Rishabha for Mercury who is the lord of Mithuna and Kanya. Malava Raga for Mithuna, Bhoopala for Kanya and the Raga Kharaharapriya is the favourite for Mercury.

☛ Suddha - Sadharana - Anthara Gandhara swaras stand for Saturn. And its Rasis are Makara and Kumbha. Bhairavi is the favourite Raga for both the Rasis. Saturn enjoys Mukhari Raga.

☛ Suddha and Prathi Madhyama represent Venus. Vrushabha and Thula Rasis belong to Venus. Sri Ragam is favourite for Vrushabha and Thula Rasis, Ananda Bhairavi is favourite to Venus.

☛ Panchama for Moon. Rasi Kataka. Kalyani is favourite for both Rasi and Planet.

☛ Suddha - Chatusruthi - Shatsruthi Dhaivatha represent Mars. Mesha - Vruschika are the Rasis for Mars. Raga Panchamam for both the Rasis and Bhairavi for Mars are favourite Ragas.

☛ **Suddha - Kaisiki - Kakali** Nishadha for Jupiter. **Dhanus** and **Meena** are Jupiter's Rasis. **Saranga** for Dhanus, **Bangala** for Meena and **Vachaspathi** for Jupiter are favourite Ragas.

☛ For the Chaya Grahas : **Neelambari** for Rahu and **Hamsadhvani** for Ketu are the favourites.

The Saptha Tala Alankaras represent the planets respectively as follows:

★ **Dhruva Tala** for Ravi, **Matya** for Moon, **Roopaka** for Mars, **Jhampa** for Mercury, **Triputa** for Jupiter, **Ata** for Venus and **Eka Talam** for Saturn.

★ **Roopaka Tala** is allotted for the Chaya Grahas but there are no individual Rasis for these planets.

★ **Brahmi - Maheswari - Kowmari - Vaishnavi - Varahi - Indrani** and **Chamunda** are the Devathas for the Saptha Swaras and **Amsa Devathas** are **Saptha Kriya - Hrishikesha - Krishna Madhusudana - Padmanabha - Dayanidhi** and **Nithya Mangala**.

★ **Mercury(Poet) Kavi, Venus: Music - Dance - Drama - Drawing** and other fine arts, **Saturn and Venus: String and Percussion Instruments, composer, etc....**

#### ABOUT MUSICAL THERAPY :

A few example of Ragas which cured the ailments and chronic diseases in my experience:

1. By singing the 72 Melakartha Ragas stomach operation was avoided and it was completely cured.
2. **Bhairavi Raga** cured T.B., Cancer, severe cold - phlegm, etc.
3. **Kharaharapriya** : Strengthened the mind and gave relief from Tension.
4. **Hindolam - Vasantha** : Gave relief from **Vatha Rogam, B.P., Gastric diseases** and purified the blood.
5. **Saranga: Pitha Roga Nivaranam.**
6. **Todi: Sleshma Roga Nivaranam.**
7. **Kalyani - Shankarabharanam - Charukesi** : gave full relief from heart disease.
8. **Asaveri** : Cured headache and psychological disorders.

#### THE GREATNESS OF RAGA

If one sings the Ragas in Upasana Marga, the benefit for the human being is invaluable. **Naa Jeeva Dhara** in **Bilahari** and **Sri Rama Padama** in **Amruthavahini Raga** which was sung by **Sri Tyagaraja** gave life to **Haridasa**. At **Tirumala Sri Tyagaraja** unable to have darshan of **Lord Srinivasa** was filled with sorrow. He sang **Thera Theeyagaradha** in **Gowlipanthu**, and had darshan of **Lord Srinivasa** and enlightenment. Overcome with bliss he praised **Venkatesha Ninnu Sevimpa** in **Madhyamavathi**. By singing **Amruthavarshini Muthuswamy Dikshitar** brought rain. **Sri Annamayya** spoke to **Lord Venkateshwara** through his Divine Music. **Purandara Dasa** always enjoyed **Dhaiva Sannidhi** through his **Nadopasana**. **Swami Haridas, Bhaktha Meera, Kabirdas, Purandara Dasa, Annamacharya, Tyagaraja, Dikshitar, Syama Sastry, Papanasam Sivan** attained siddhi through **Nadopasana**. Singing the Ragas with devotion makes them very beautiful, at the same time the Raga Devathas shower their blessings on the Gayaka as well as Rasikas.

As per the advice given and shown in the Kritis about **Nadopasana** by **Tyagaraja**, we will certainly get the benefit and blessings by Raga Devathas. Singing the Ragas scientifically with devotion and the divine and devotional lyrics with **Bhakti Bhava** will elevate the **Sadhaka - Gayaka** towards the path of **Salvation**.

#### Reference :

- Veda Prakasika (Veena Rahasyam)**  
**Sandhya Vandaneeya Thathvartha.**  
 By **Y. Subbaraya Sharma**  
**Theory Book.** By **Aripirala Sathyanarayana Murthy**  
**Ancient Book on Astrology**  
**Sangeetha Rahasya.** By **Nijaguna Shiva Yogi**  
**Sangeetha Kalpadhrama.** By **Dr. L. Muthaiah Bhogavathar**

#### "MUSIC SYMPOSIUM - 2001" (An Introduction)

The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, hailed as a unique instrument of National Integration and Cultural Synthesis has primarily taken, as part of its core agenda, the propagation, research and education in Music and Fine Arts. Towards this end, the Sabha, along with training music students both in practical and theoretical aspects and bringing out a research-oriented cultural quarterly, SHANMUKHA, has also been organising periodically, Symposia, lecture-demonstrations, music appreciation sessions and the like.

Though this activity had a setback after the unfortunate fire in 1990, now that the Hall is restored to a better and more glorious **Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Auditorium**, in pursuance of the inheritance of India's ancient cultural heritage, the Sabha revived after a decade the convention and held on September 8th & 9th a 2-day "Music Symposium - 2001" with "Siksha" and "Sangita Nidhi" as its themes.

The music scenario is once again at the crossroads. With the emergence of the IT revolution, there has been a compacting of the world and terms such as Globalisation of music, Fusion music, Jazz yatra, etc., are receiving serious mention in music circles. There have also been technological advancements leading to its own revolution in musical aids and presentational forms.

From Karna-Parampara to script-singing, from Gurukulavasam to time-framed syllabus-oriented institutional

training, Music education has undergone a sea change. Cassette Gurus, Alapana handouts, Kalpana-swaras in capsules and Manodharma made-to-order are not merely cliches, but serve as practical aids to ambitious aspirants waiting to capture the platform.

With all these leading our talented youngsters to have one foot in classical tradition and the other drawn towards more tantalising varieties, where are we heading towards? What are we in for? Where is the core of the Raga-based Indian Classical Music - Karnatic & Hindustani - left in the melee? How do we then stem the tide and bring about Manodharma soul, the *tour de force*, of classical music into Siksha?

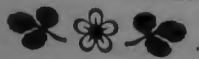
These and similar other questions formed an essential part of the Music Symposium - 2001.

As a complement to this, the Symposium also included a probe into the Hidden Wealth of Music - Sangita Nidhi that remain dormant, yet to be fully brought to limelight. The golden age of Karnatic music under the Music Trinity had not, after all, been an overnight phenomenon. A precious lot of evolution had been taking place - a Kosha that preceded and paved the way for later day concretisation and sophistication.

The Symposium had much to share on this. The Sangita Nidhi brought to fore within the Symposium time-schedule, and the source material it contained if incorporated, for instance, in Siksha would certainly inspire the students and draw them back to classical fold. The exploration should continue.

## The papers and lec-dems presented :

Keynote Address :	'Garland' N. Rajagopalan (I.A.S.) Retd.)
Concept of Intensive Coaching :	Shri M. Chandrasekharan
"Nurturing Manodharma in Time-framed Training (Karnatic Vocal)"	} Prof. T. R. Subramanian
"Manodharma in Academic Fold" - Accent on Raga Darshan (Hindustani Vocal)	
"Imparting Manodharma in Instrumental Siksha" (Karnatic Instrumental)	} Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas
"Adapting Gurukula to Academic Patterns in Percussion"	
"Application of Technological Aids":	Shri Vijay Siva
"Role of Sabhas, Media"	} Shri S. Seshadri - Sabha representative Shri Vijay Siva - Artist representative Shri V. Gangadhar - Media representative Shri Venkat R. Chary - Rasika
"Sangita & Sahitya" (Karnatic)	} Smt. R. Vedavalli
"Sahitya in Hindustani Music - Bandish"	
"From Bhajana Sampradaya to Classical Tradition" (Annamacharya to Tyagaraja)	} Smt. Shruti Sadolikar Katkar
"Tamil Trinity" (Muthutandavar, Marimutta Pillai & Arunachala Kavi) - The Potential Classicism in their creations	
"Trail Blazer 'Bard' Oothukadu Venkatasubbiar	} Prof. S. R. Janakiraman
"Bharati Triumvirate" (Gopalakrishna Bharati, Subramanya Bharati, Suddhananda Bharati)	
Moderator :	Shri K. S. Mahadevan



## A Report

## SHANMUKHANANDA'S "MUSIC SYMPOSIUM - 2001"

A grand two-day 'Music Symposium - 2001', was organised by Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha at their Shanmukhananda Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Auditorium on 8th and 9th September 2001. A galaxy of eminent musicians and musicologists from both Hindustani and Karnatic streams from all over India participated in the Sangeet Yatra gyrating around two issues - "Siksha as music education has been subjected to various pulls and pressures, strains and stresses - how do we instil in our younger generation the core of a raga-based music? How do we stem the tide and bring about Manodharma? Today's deliberations will find answers to these questions. Tomorrow we will have a probe into the hidden wealth of music - Sangeeta Nidhi - yet to be fully brought out to limelight. Experts will



'SIKSHA' (imparting training in classical music) and 'SANGITA NIDHI' (the hidden wealth of our Indian classical music). And musicians, music lovers and students from all over Mumbai converged in large numbers to participate in the symposium.

The first day's programme began with an invocation by the students of Shanmukhananda Sangeeta Vidyalaya. Its director, Dr. Sulochana Rajendran, explained the theme of the symposium:

share their finds with us".

Dr. V. Subramanian, President of the Shanmukhananda Sabha then welcomed the audience and participants. Addressing the gathering he declared that Sangita Yatras brought one closer to divinity and such Yatras should be a permanent feature to enable one keep abreast of the developments and innovations in the musical field. He also suggested setting



up a corpus fund for conducting such meets on a regular basis.

Inaugurating the Symposium, Mr. V. Ranganathan, Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra explained how music transported the listener to spiritual glory and compared those who did not enjoy music to cattle - the only difference being the absence of a tail. He added that only when one's ego was subjugated one recognised the *Aantaryami* or inner self and music helped one conquer the ego and reach salvation. While lauding the Shanmukhananda Sabha's efforts in preserving and propagating the musical tradition, he opined that such symposiums should be conducted annually and assured all possible support from the government.

The Guest of Honour 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan in his Keynote Address affirmed that Karnatic music with its distinct Manodharma characteristics will continue to thrive sans Gurukulam system of training. According to him Sangita Nidhi covers the domains and interplay of all the three goddesses Lakshmi[vocal]; Saraswati[veena]; Durga[power]. Deficiency in or dominance of one to the exclusion or detriment of one or the other, robs the music of its grace, appeal and thrill.

"Manodharma' is the Kurukshetra of the finest of fine arts where the Manasikha battle is fought at the intellectual level with multitudes of soft arms like Raga, Tala, Sahitya, Laya, Bhava-Rasa, Brikas, Sancharas, Sangathis and many more. If Manodharma inspiration eludes or deserts, the concert fails to take off. Hence Manodharma falls in the realms of all the three - wealth of Manodharma, wisdom in its usage as per occasion and the power and energy that fuel its use", he reiterated.

The first day's technical session began with a lecture-demonstration by Violin virtuoso, M. Chandrasekharan on the "Concept of Intensive Coaching". He demonstrated his teaching technique emphasising the usage of Anuswaras which he averred would bring out the subtle nuances of our Gamaka-oriented music system as also the Gayaki style of playing an instrument. Apart from advocating a close master-student relationship, he stressed the importance of students religiously attending their Guru's and other artistes' concerts, and instrumentalists learning vocal.

Renowned vocalist Prof. T. R. Subramanian dealt with the technique of "Nurturing Manodharma in Time-framed Training". He reiterated that Manodharma Sangeetam cannot be learnt, memorised or rehearsed and advised Kelvi Gnanam or hearsay as the standard prescription for acquiring Manodharma.

"This unique pride of Indian music is a result of intuition rather than tuition. Thus nurturing Manodharma featured in Raga Alapana, Tanam, Niraval and Kalpana Swarams depend on the innate aptitude of the student, which can be nurtured by a Guru. No time-frame can be specified or guaranteed for 'nurturing' Manodharma. The age-old Gurukula system had no 'time table' or concrete schedule in the process of teaching. All these have crept only in the evolution of institutional teaching " he revealed.

He asserted that Raga Alapana can be the only parameter for judging an artiste's calibre and skilfully described how a musician acquires the knowledge.

"One fourth is acquired from Guru, one fourth through Kelvi Gnanam, one-fourth through self-development and one-fourth through teaching. As

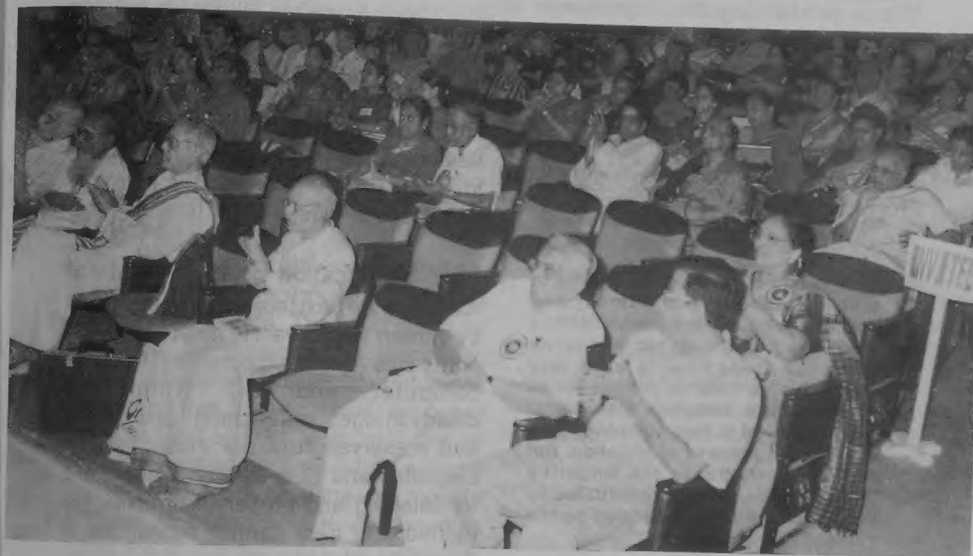
Mudikondan once said good music is achieved through - *vidhya - datta - bhuvali - vistritam*. Thus one's '*vidhya*' attains '*vistritam*' (increases) through '*dattam*' (giving).

TRS, as he is often fondly known, then demonstrated how various learning exercises were imparted right from different permutations of Sarali Varisai to Alankaras and Dattu Swaram and Tanam.

The session then switched over to

"Ragas are believed to have specific Rasas and Bhavas. Again in Hindustani system, Ragas are associated with season, time of day and night and different occasions in the life of an individual as well as society. While learning a Raga one has to learn and imbibe its Manodharma along with its various nuances of expression. When the Manodharma of the performer gets tuned with the Manodharma of the Raga, then its performance creates perceptible wonders" he added.

He further stated that a Guru was



A Section of the audience

Hindustani music with Dr. Vidyadhar Vyasa, a stalwart of Gwalior Gharana and Head, Dept. of Music, University of Mumbai, sharing his views and experience on "Manodharma in Academic Fold" with accent on Raga Darshan. He defined Manodharma as an encompassing state of mind that not only contains aptitude, interest, liking or desire but the very urge that comes from within the heart and mind to pursue a goal that becomes the very purpose of one's life.

there to identify the aptitude and mindset of a student and then it is the student's duty to explore and find the right Dharma for him or her.

"And it is a journey and not an overnight revelation. He or she has to study, listen and find out what is best suitable. Guru can show the path and initially hold a student's hand and help him take a few steps like parents guiding a growing child. But later on he has to let him go on his own. Identification of one's mindset and

Dharma are the basic requirements for any development. Once that is found then it is a life long journey" he declared.

Later he demonstrated Megh and Hamsadvani Ragas, singing a prayer and a romantic composition in the latter.

In the post-lunch session, the renowned Vainika from Mysore, Prof. R. Visweswaran, focused on "Imparting Manodharma in Instrumentalist Siksha". While reinforcing the importance of instrumentalists learning vocal he identified Manodharma Sangita as a unique feature of Indian music providing wide scope for artiste's spontaneous creativity. According to the Vidwan, Dharma in the musical context denoted "functioning of the mind" which included creativity.

"Our music is made up of Kalpita or created music[compositions] and Kalpana or creative music. While teaching Kalpita music poses no problem, Kalpana music is not so easy as there is no fixed or predetermined contours as in compositions. Further teaching vocal is less complicated as it is more a process of imitation. But on the instruments the fingering technique has to be demonstrated by the Guru and comprehended by the student", he appended.

In his demonstration, the Vainika elucidated how the Ragas should be taught through simple phrases and through the shape a Raga assumes in different compositions thereby discreetly outlining a mini Alapana. According to him, Arohana, Avarohana Sancharas, Gamakas, microtones, are the ingredients that bring out the Rasa and Bhava of the Raga. He played Devagandhari Raga to show how the contours and the nuances of a Raga can be depicted by studying the Jeeva

Swaras of the Raga. He also played Tanam in Nayaki.

Then the stage was taken over by percussive instrumentalists. Tabla and Mridangam maestros Sadanand Nayampalli and T. S. Nandakumar, (who is also on the faculty of Shanmukhananda Sangeeta Vidyalaya) along with their team dwelled on "Adapting Gurukula to Academic Patterns in Percussion".

Nayampalli too felt that in today's scenario one can only try to adapt and apply standards and principles of gurukula and listed out several possible methods. Then both the team demonstrated the methods they adopt to initiate the students into the realm of respective percussive instruments.

"Application of Technological Aids" was the next topic elaborately dealt by Vidwan Vijay Siva. He dealt with each of the aids - from microphones, radio to computer and CD Rom, its disadvantages in teaching, promotion and preservation of our music. While cassettes and CDs can be a good aid for listening and preserving music, he opined that they cannot substitute a Guru in teaching.

"The singer may have made mistakes. It may be an edited version from which a student will not get total picture of the composition. Also the voice culture may be wrongly adopted. Hence they can at best be a guide like books" he averred.

The first day's technical session concluded with representatives from Sabha, artiste and media discussing the role of Sabhas and media. On behalf of Shanmukhananda Sabha Sri S. Seshadri, the Convenor of the

Symposium, analysed the historical growth of the various Sabhas in the metropolis from 1927 to the present day. He observed that the role of preserving and promoting art and culture which rested with the royal families has now become the responsibility of Sabhas. He also suggested that the strains of classical music should be taken to the village by the Sabhas as the temples no longer have the required funds. Vijay Siva on behalf of artistes and Venkat Chary on behalf of Rasika also voiced their views.

The first day's session culminated in a superb violin concert by M. Chandrasekharan and party.

## THE YATRA CONTINUED ON THE SECOND DAY

The second day opened with a song on the 'Saptaswara' by ENT surgeon Dr. Mehta. The chief guest for day two, Dr. Bhalchandra Mungekar, Vice Chancellor, University of Mumbai, observed that for any artiste, his or her art was God and that to excel in that art was the best homage an artiste can pay to God. He averred that the very thought - 'there is nothing more to learn' - would spell the end of progress. Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas, the Guest of Honour that day, seconded saying "work was equivalent to worshipping God".

The technical session on the second day began with Sangeetha Kalanidhi R. Vedavalli's lecture-demo on 'Sangeetham and Sahityam' with a variety of examples. She explained that 'Sahityam' originated from the word 'Sahita' meaning togetherness and that the word connoted a string of words meaningfully placed together. 'Sahityam' in its old form was Padam or words.

Karnatic music, she said, is a combination of Swaram[notes], Padam[words] and Talam[rhythm].

While stressing the importance of Sahityam and Sangeetham she mused:

"Sahityam set to tune is Sangeetham. Sahityam without Sangeetham is mere verse. At the same time, Sangeetham without Sahityam made it lifeless and devoid of Rasa Bhavam. Thus when an instrument is played one can still enjoy the music so long as the player sings the Sahityam in his/her mind. This alone will let the Bhavam flow through the instrument". While pointing out the importance of selecting appropriate Ragas to portray the Bhavam she insisted that the present musicians or musicologists had no right to discuss the pros and cons of the Ragas chosen by past composers for their songs.

Renowned Hindustani vocalist Smt. Shruti Sadolikar Katkar dwelt on the "Sahitya in Hindustani Music - Bandish". She narrated the transition from Dhrupad and Dhamar of olden times that worked within theoretical framework to the present day Khayals that are more flexible giving room for imagination. The words, she said, are stretched in Khayals to providing the scope for uplifting the Raga and Swara Bhava. She demonstrated various types of Bandishes in different Ragas like Bhageshri, Malkauns etc.

Katkar also pointed out that devotional compositions were a great treasure of Hindustani classical music and referred to Surdasji who was a great composer of Bhajans.

From "Bhajana Sampradaya to Classical Tradition (Annamacharya to Tyagaraja)" was the next topic addressed

by musicologist, master-performer and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award winner Prof. S. R. Janakiraman. Starting on a humorous note - that he had to rush through the session as he was hard-pressed for 'mani' ['time' in Tamil] and not 'money', - he established an instant rapport with the audience. "Bhajans were the simplest form of colloquial music sung by the common man. It did not call for complicated words or beats. "Namavali, which is a sacred form of music should be taught to beginners" he stated and sang a piece in different tempos to convey how through this simple form one can educate the student about a Raga and different Tala rhythms.

He also stated that while Tyagaraja sang on Lord Rama, Annamacharya's Ishta Deva was Venkataramana.

"Music prior to pre-Trinity period was either too technical or too devotional. The medieval music compositions like Prabandhas and Suladis were simple in nature and more musical. Then came the Keertana still devotional in character and finally the Kriti," he revealed.

Dr. Premeela Gurumurthy, a performing artiste both in Karnatic and Hindustani classical music and a Professor in the Department of Music - University of Madras, dealt with the potential classicism in the creations of "Tamil Trinity - Muttutadavar, Marimutta Pillai and Arunachala Kavi". She while narrating the unique features of each of the composer also presented some of their compositions.

"Muttutadavar is considered as the architect of Tamil Kirtanas. Marimutta Pillai who sang in praise of Lord Nataraja adopted the teasing technique

[Ninda Stuti] in some of his pieces. Arunachala Kavirayar was influenced by the two great works - *Tirukkural* and *Kambaramayanam* and composed his own *Ramayana - Rama Nataka Kirtanai* - in the form of Kirtanas, Viruttam and Kanni."

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran, columnist, critic, Director of Shanmukhananda Sangeetha Vidyalaya, visiting faculty (University of Mumbai) and Editor of Shanmukha, focused on "Trail Blazer 'Bard' Oothukadu Venkaasubbiar" and rendered his compositions along with a team of students.

"Though Oothukadu was a great Vaggeyakara there was some hesitancy in bringing to light his compositions. Since the age belonged predominantly to Bhajana Sampradaya perhaps Venkata Kavi's creations surging with rhythmic lilt were not appreciated." Rajendran opined.

According to Rajendran, Venkata Kavi's compositions ranged from Varnams, Kritis to Ragamalikas, Padams and Javalis and he was very adept with the Talas and his compositions abound in 'Solkattu Swaras' and 'Adukkus Swaras' too.

"Due to profusion of lyrics, it requires great precision of diction, breath control, rhythmic grip and voice control to sing his compositions" Rajendran added.

The demonstration centred around Venkata Kavi's Samudaya Kritis encompassing *Saptaratna* and *Navavarana Kritis* which exhibited similarities to the *Pancharatnas* of Tyagaraja and *Navavaranas* of Dikshitar respectively.

Next, Guru Rajee Narayan and Vidushi Alamelu Mani analysed the

contributions made by Tamil poets Gopalakrishna Bharati, Subramania Bharati and Suddhananda Bharati under the heading "Bharati Tirumvirate". After giving a brief sketch of each of the composer, the duo sang selected creations of the composers.

Summing up the two-day symposium, the renowned musicologist and critic, and one of the founders of Shanmukhananda K. S. Mahadevan, who acted as a moderator, appreciated the colossal effort put in by the Shanmukhananda team, particularly by S. Seshadri, Sulochana Rajendran and Viji Iyengar, and the freshness with which the subjects were dealt with. "Mrs. Rajendran's presentation was fantastic. She unfolded a panorama of songs and revealed the magnitude of Oothukadu who seemed almost on par with Tyagaraja and the like," he said.

He also lauded M. Chandrasekhar's "exposition of teaching", T. R. Subramanian's "multi-faceted mindframe free from inhibitions, Vidyadhar Vyas' "superb handling of Hamsadhvani", R. Vedavalli's "erudite lecture" and S.R. Janakiraman's "fascinating mind which always came up with many trumps."

The symposium came to an end with an evening concert by Vijay Siva and team.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Pick of GOLDEN MESSAGES :

Sri T. T. Vasu, President, Music Academy, Chennai:

"The symposium has been given an appropriate caption. It was the Gurukula method of 'Siksha' that built up our musical treasure, the 'Sangita Nidhi'. ...Modern inventions and gadgets have globalised our music and there has been a silent revolution in teaching methods. It was

time that a symposium was arranged to take stock of the situation and the Shanmukhananda Sabhas's decision to hold one has not come a minute too soon.... I send my hearty greetings to the Sabha and wish the 2-day Music Symposium all success."

Sangita Kalanidhi Smt. D. K. Pattammal & R. Iswaran:

"We are happy to note that you are reviving music symposiums in the auditorium after the fire tragedy. We wish you all success. We only pray to Him to give you all the necessary strength and courage to cope up against the trend for traditional Karnatic Music and bring back the glories of the past."

Renowned music critic, Sri Subbudu:

The symposium is most welcome and timely. All along we have been concentrating only on concerts and not discussing and evaluating the pros and cons about Karnatic/Hindustani music. These discussions by eminent people would go a long way in enriching our knowledge.

Renowned Musicologist & Music Critic Sri K.S. Mahadevan:

The "Music Symposium - 2001" has been comprehensively planned and designed to fill the minds of the layman and the professional with what some of the ablest practitioners and exponents of the great Indian music tradition have thought, felt and projected to the public from time to time over the ages. I would like to term this Symposium as a "Great Conversation" in which powerful and authoritative minds will be talking to each other, connecting mutually and finally to the uninitiated in music as well as the seasoned rasika ...

Like a developing fluid on film, this Symposium will I trust, bring into consciousness what many perhaps did not know before and also incidentally furnish tools of self-discovery.

The mysterious world of music calls for continuous exploration, subjective and objective. The value and greatness of the ensuing discussions would, I make bold to think, be felt even more after we have heard them and cogitated thereafter.

... We offer you this Symposium as an Act of Faith.

**Bhishma Pithamaha Sri Semmangudi R.SRINIVASA IYER**

When this Sabha took the initiative and after considerable effort, succeeded in merging all the Sabhas to form "The Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha" it became a landmark in the cultural life of Mumbai. No praise can be too much for the unremitting efforts of Prof. T. V. Ramanujam, Sri R. S. Mani, Sri S. Seshadri and their colleagues to bring that about.

Ever since, this great Sabha has been marching steadily for over 50 years acquiring great name and fame presenting great Vidwans and Vidushis with their Vintage classical music. As Rajaji rightly put it, the Sabha has become "A temple of Music for Music".

Equally worthy of special mention is the organisation of the Music School in which Vocal, Veena, Violin, Mridangam, Sitar, were systematically taught, under the superb leadership of my dear friend and colleague, the late Sangeetha Kalanidhi K. S. Narayanaswamy. I am happy that the strong foundations of classical Carnatic music laid by him are yielding fruit and some fine artists are emerging from the school. I am sure it will take its place as a real "Kalaikoodam".

The fire that engulfed the Sabha's auditorium was unfortunate. However like the great fire of London after which London emerged a cleaner and more beautiful city, the Sabha has emerged bigger and better, thanks to the munificence of broad minded Donors, and Dr. V. Subramanian, the President, who has ably steered the Sabha through the recent traumatic years.

Myself and my colleagues in the profession have always had a special respect ("Thani Mariyadhai") for this great institution. I pray to the Almighty to shower His blessings on this unique cultural landmark of India.

**Pandit JASRAJ:**

"When God likes someone he makes him a listener, when God loves someone, he makes him a musician,  
..... A Indian Classical Musician"

\* \* \* \* \*

#### COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

In these days of electronic warfare where the cassettes and CDs have almost replaced Gurus, this symposium revealed to the younger generation the importance of learning music under a proper tutelage. And there was a thrill about the whole event as one Rasika remarked: "the 'old - time feeling of festivity is back in Shanmukhananda for a change and I hope they conduct something like this every year."

There was general appreciation for the time allotted to the participants giving them enough scope to deal with their subjects. However, most of the participants concentrated on reading out their papers, which were already with the audience instead of indulging in practical demonstration. "Much valuable time was lost in this. Instead they could have given a gist and proceeded with practical demonstrations. As a result "not much practical information regarding 'Siksha' and 'Sangita Nidhi' were delineated" lamented many among the audience. In fact, most of them were looking forward to some practical demonstrations and useful tips on the methods of teaching from the artistes.

There was wide admiration too for Shri M. Chandrasekharan and his interesting practical demonstration on

teaching a student and for Dr. Sulochana Rajendran whose demonstration was enlightening laced with Oothukkadu Venkatasubbiar's compositions beautifully rendered by the students. In contrast, Prof. Visweswaran's failure to demonstrate the methods of teaching Veena greatly disappointed many. "He was only playing the veena to show how it can be played without plucking the strings frequently. We know this is possible by using electronic gadgets. Instead he should have shown how he would teach the student to play the Ragam, Tanam and Swarams on the veena" remarked an upcoming artiste.

A much more acceptable suggestion was to allow interested members to slip in their questions after each session to someone in-charge who could hand them over to the relevant artiste of the day for perusal. These could then be tackled in a special session set aside, may be, for an hour or so towards the end of each day's programme in the presence of all the artistes of the day. This would serve the purpose of the symposium as the topics discussed would be fresh in the minds of the artistes as well as the audience and clarification could be sought on the subject matter tackled on that day.

Prof. S. R. Janakiraman's demonstration was more appreciated for his lively music laced with humorous comments which was a welcome change. However many felt that he spoke a bit too fast and they could not comprehend much of the technical information in that speed.

Deviating from the normal procedure, this symposium did not have a 'question - answer' interlude after each session. While some appreciated this as it saved time, others missed the opportunity to interact with the vidwans and veterans.

Several members felt that sending

**Janaki Krishnamoorthy  
Lalitha Arun Bharadwaj**





With best compliments  
from

## JAYRAJ AGENCIES

Jiji House, 3rd Floor  
15, Raveline Street  
Mumbai-400 001.

**Phone : Res.:** 402 18 71 / 401 16 64

**Office :** 235 65 91 / 235 65 92 / 235 65 93

**Fax :** 91-22-235 65 93

Reflections of the Guest of Honour

### SANGITA YATRA MUSIC SYMPOSIUM 2001 By 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

What a conjuring term it is! It is totally Indian in origin, concept and usage. *Sthala yatra*, *Tirtha yatra*, etc., are commonly in use. This *Sangita Yatra* could have never had a birth or beginning in India, and naturally in this planet, and it shall never end. It was there when the first Indian man and woman appeared or woke up. Where is need to surrender the proud privilege to satisfy the unnatural egoistic claims of others or the isolated discordant, dissenting voice which had dogged this ancient nation for long on every issue? Sage Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamigal had said that *Shadjam* and *Panchamam* are unborn and that the remaining five *Swaras* were born off the five faces of Lord Shiva. When were these five born? They should have naturally been seniors to the first man [*Laya Pitha*] and lady [*Sangita Mata*] on this holy land and universe! Suddenly all were in position perhaps! How? *Sama Veda* is standing testimony as the Lord declares that He is *Sama Veda* Himself! So, music in India is not only as old as the first man and lady but of God Himself! [God! Am I right in stating it so!]

Do you not hear from the distant Patasala, Vidyalaya or the temple the conjuring musical chant brimming with melody and harmony of sweet-voiced young lads with bright intellectual faces symbolizing innocence and *Nischalana* faith and fortitude who know nothing but the only noble craving and anxiety to learn all, yes, the total, of what their *Guru*

chooses to impart quite in accordance with the standards outlined in the *Taittiriopanishad* and other ancient lore? Pray, walk up to them and you shall see a dozen disciplined charming lads soaked in concentration with a solitary scholarly *Guru* presiding over the little *Sadas* reciting the musical 'Aha O, ha ha ha or hav hav hav', etc., soaked in sweet melody and harmony and strict laya! Is music then the 'impartible estate' or hereditary 'property' of the Indian? It is, it is so! Rev. Heras wrote over a hundred years back,

"In the East, there is no twilight before dawn. The ruddy edge of the morning sun swiftly leaps on the horizon. Even so, it had been with the van of Indian civilization. There had been no dreary passage from barbarianism on to civilization'.

Sir William Jones has said so. Many eminent persons have vouched for it. Literature, sculpture, architecture etc., confirm it. [Alas Some Indians may like to doubt it! Dissent has been our oldest but odd virtue or a favourite hobby. Some choose to argue for others on vital issues contrary to their own conscience! So, let them! Let them, great souls they are, satisfy themselves.]

Verily this is the Home of Music. 'Singa Marattiar idattil, Kaveri alitta Sangitam'. Magnificent auditorium, divine environment, presence of the cream of musical scholarship and eminence, lavish arrangements, the inspiring occasion, will to present the best in

music to help the prosperity of the art and science, etc. Thought provoking notes on the topics chosen for the Symposium, viz., *Sangita Nidhi* and *Siksha*, practically encompass the whole gamut of music and it is indeed a tribute to the organizers.

I was at Mumbai on the 7th September, 2001. The mission related to Saptaswaras. Saturday was the seventh. Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha was born in September! September is the seventh according to the Julian calendar. As the music of the 'Seven' was consuming my mind and I walked out of the airport, there stood bearded young and elegant Vidwan, Puducode Sri Viswanathan full of musical smiles to receive me. Between words of conversation, Viswa muses wherever he is and whatever he does. **Perhaps it is the first demonstration of musical therapy to recharge oneself and get a feel of Santam, Soukhyam etc!**

I enter the stately building of Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha. What a glorious edifice the great men of the Sabha have raised with vision, a magnificent and mighty Home of Arts and Symbol of Architecture full of grace, culture and fragrant conception! The vast auditorium, the biggest in Asia perhaps, is a grand and most thoughtfully named after the musical Sage of Kanchi. The spacious halls, verandahs, etc., all signify the intense thought and planning that have gone into its construction. I stood there gazing at it with awe and admiration. One notices in this Sabha of vast parts, Art weds education and

Social Service. The remaining steps of Saptapadi, if they are to be scaled yet, may be ascended soon! In the historical state of proud nationalism [*Singa Marattiar*], the art that prospered in Chola Desa would seem to have taken deep roots as the speech of the Vice Chancellor of the Mumbai University and others proved. Art is not chained to specific places, it is true.

In the Sabha premises, walked there hither and thither a gentleman [affectionately called *Mamaji* and accorded university recognition by the Vice Chancellor himself] ever busy, rich in age and clad in classical *panchakaccha*, *jibba* and flowing *angavastra*, once the insignia of aristocratic landlords, many of whom were patrons of *Sangitam* too. Sometimes our gentleman moved about in *durita kala* and sometimes in *chowka kala*, of course without background music, scattering smiles, courteous words and suggestions all the time. Maybe he is rich in age but he is young in heart and action. Age has not withered his robust resort for musical endeavours.

I'm Seshadri, the Convenor who spoke to you the other day', said he. And rarely I missed him for half an hour at a stretch during the two impressionable days I had the privilege of spending there. He was there in the auditorium, in the fourth, sixth or the second or any floor ever intent to make the occasion grand and memorable. And indeed, it turned out to be so in deed. He has fathered the birth of Classical Carnatic music in this commercial capital of India and has been continuously toiling without break during the last six decades. A symbol of

Nishkamya Karma, may God give him strength to toil and continue his success story for four more decades in the same strain for the prosperity of the ancient, living art for which he had sown the seed and has nourished it, before allowing him to take a seat in the auditorium as a senior *rasika*. All honours to him.

There is the smiling Sri Jayaram Mani, whose father was the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees and whose portrait lay in one of the rooms as his bust had been installed. Perhaps the portrait could adorn anyone of the rooms! Sri K. S. Mahadevan, one of the founding fathers and a musical soul of vast parts, arrived in the evening, presumably with some participants. Soft and pleasing, he is a gentleman endowed with the pick of literature and music of generations. There is a peculiar atmosphere here in this Sabha - a quality, a tradition, a culture which delight the visitor. It is the composite amalgam of courtesy, smiling countenance, a will to provide the best and make the occasion, the celebration a great success. As Cardinal Newman had said, they seem to be 'receiving' while actually extending some service! This transplanted crop of the South at Mumbai bears all the glories of an ancient culture. A great virtue indeed!

\* \* \* \* \*

The Symposium is the brain-child of Dr. [Mrs.] Sulochana Rajendran, Director of the Vidyalaya of the Sabha. The learned Doctor is also the Editor of the prestigious magazine of the Sabha bearing the name *Shanmukha*. So there is 'Shanmukhananda Shanmukham'! She was born in a cultured family of great

men in different fields and combines the grace and charm of the South and the North, of musician, musicologist, writer, journalist, teacher, administrator and many more. Her incisive mind, her delightful surgical pen and her passion for music richly adorn her activities. And she gave a specimen of the same when she presented the richest demonstration lecture on Uthukadu Venkatasubbayyar on the second day. She brought in during the demonstration aspects which had not touched the attention of scholars etc., all along.

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran has a team of dedicated, devoted artistes in vocal music, instruments and percussion all imbued with the single mission of making the occasion great and memorable. She stepped out of the two-day Symposium like Caesar emerging out of Gaul with unqualified success and graceful satisfaction not only to herself but to the thousands who stood elevated or enlightened because of the Symposium.

We see icons of Lords and Goddesses with divine charm and eternal smiles. We see statues and paintings putting on their best smiles but they lack the capacity to change and show signs of *roudras*, *bhatsam*, *karuna*, etc., if need be there. But the learned Convenor, the Director and their dedicated team of *vidwans*, *vidushis*, etc., all in full array and decor, enjoy full knowledge of the diverse emotions, the *ragas* and compositions in respect of each and perhaps had the stress and opportunities to exhibit or feel at least a few of them. But they were all attention smiling in the morn, afternoon, evening and were ever 'smiling monuments in

life and blood and cultured, courteous wonders in action' and it is a great tribute to the Institution, the Convenor, the Director and the graceful ladies and gentlemen who managed the show at different levels. I salute them all with respect and regard. If only all institutions are imbued with this spirit of service! Is it not a far cry of despair? I am reminded of the film song, 'Ninaippadellaam nadanduvittaal, Deivam Veru Illai.' Dr. Mungekar, the Vice Chancellor, said something akin to that in his scholarly speech on the second day.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the 8th September, 2001, scholar-administrator Sri A. Ranganathan, IAS, Chief Secretary of the Maharashtra Government gave an enlightening lecture while inaugurating the symposium. The keynote address of Sri 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan, I.A.S. Retd., had been distributed and was supplemented by observations by him. On the next day, Dr. Balachandra L. Mungekar, Vice Chancellor of Mumbai University, presented a beautiful oration as Chief Guest, was all praise for the Sabha and its endeavours and promised all help. Distinguished musicians, musicologists and scholars spoke on diverse subjects bearing on the science and art of music and its glories. There were concerts by Sri M. Chandrasekharan, the eminent violinist and by Vijay Siva accompanied by competent artistes and both the concerts were listened to by full houses. The music-crazy audience sat spell-bound to hear the enlightening speeches of Prof. T. R. Subramanian, Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas,

M. Chandrasekharan, Smt. Vedavalli and others

'Imparting Manodharma in Instrumental Siksha, by Prof. R. Visweswaran was demonstrated by his playing the veena. It was delightful to see how he cajols, induces and extracts from veena elongated *Sangatis* - continuity for long time without the chiming of the instrument. Veena Dhanammal was reputed to be an expert on this. Veena S. Balachander used to demonstrate this. And Prof. Visweswaran did it all with grace sans show. Prof. S. R. Janakiraman was his usual self ever in top gear not waiting for breathing even. He is indeed a reservoir of knowledge and wisdom which requires much longer time to reveal it all fully. His eagerness to share his profound expertise with others is immense. He takes to his presentations never in a commercial spirit. Indeed he was given extra time which he deservedly desired.

Many scholars and many authorities have been consistently expressing the view at the symposium and outside that universities are not turning out musicians of merit owing to basic causes like:

recruitment defects,  
music as the last resort for youth,  
recruitment of strange students - [Much time is needed for finding his level and attune himself. *Vimayantu brhmacarinas swaha* - disciple swallows the offering meant for the Homal]

limited duration, 'No teacher can produce good musicians faced with a time limit' - Prof. TRS

limited syllabus,  
overemphasis on musicology rather than on singing - Prof. TRS.  
inadequate exposure to practical music - M. Chandrasekharan

urban pressures and diversions,  
lack of time, avenue, opportunity for practice, etc., [Yehudi Menuhin's practice even on travel on Pullman car, consistent practice of Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar and others.]  
lack of opportunities and prospects to diploma holders in life,  
inadequate liaison between the teacher & the taught,  
Western orientation of classes does not help since a *bhava* and *manodharma* based music calls for personal contacts, constant exchanges, etc.

Vidwan M. Chandrasekharan avers that all nuances could not be taught in classes but could only be got by listening to teacher's singing and of others [Advice of Patnam to Mysore Vasu is relevant]

Prof. TRS has convincingly presented the issues in his paper

- Music is the last resort, almost a happy resort to many, to spend time and years!
- Talented boys shying away from music, 'Paavam, nalla collegil idam kidaikkavillai polirukku!'
- No screening, all and sundry being brought in. Only place with assured seats!
- Overemphasis on *lakshana* in classes and much less on practical performing, etc.]

'Universities do not produce performing musicians' and that 'Universities are not the places to produce performing artistes of high merit.'

The same view is shared by many. 'Introduce music in high schools', has been the cry for long. Even Dr. K.M. Munshiji had said so. Will it ever be given effect to and will it remedy the situation? What are the alternatives, remedies to cure this drought of

talents among University-born students? Unfortunately no concrete suggestion seems to have been aired!

This Symposium which gathered the cream of distinguished professors of India of high repute was expected to yield constructive and productive decisions to be acted upon. A request was also made to the learned participants not merely to discuss and forget. Unfortunately, there was no response to sit down and work out the remedial alternatives. Perhaps the Golden Jubilee of the Sabha Symposium may take special efforts to bring out the 'Blue print for Changes in Collegiate courses in Music.' Learned professors could give the gist of alternatives, remedial measures to be adopted.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let me record that the best musical lecture-demonstration that appealed to the audience was that of Dr. Sulochana Rajendran on the Uthukadu Bard. She was able to bring to notice similarities in the compositions of the Bard and Sri Tyagaraja and how the Bard was a trend-setter/trail-blazer. A musical demonstration is at its best when it is demonstrated with music, speeches being confined to clarifications alone. Veena Dhanammal used to give expression to the sarcastic remark, 'Sabhavil sangitam pesaraalaame!' The learned Doctor avoided that pitfall of speech-making and there was copious music by herself accompanied by her able associates and dedicated disciples. The Uthukadu bard came to life at the symposium!

\* \* \* \* \*

In tune with the saying 'Sevikku unavillai enil, vayitrakkum konjam eeyapadam', there was provision for good food but unlike what one sees in some forums, the facility was made available at specific times for a limited time to ensure that concerts or presentations are not affected and 'belly does not rob the mind and heart of listening to what has been arranged after considerable planning and a lot of labour and at great cost'! Actually this was the complaint by a poet in *nindhastuti* in *Purananuru*.

\* \* \* \* \*

An air of the imperishable glory, magnificent grandeur and of the gifts of music to culture, in short the 'Music of India', engulfed the spacious Sabha premises flooded with musicians, musicologists, music-lovers, research-scholars, students, etc., on both the days from morn to night. It was all educative, elevating, enlightening and entertaining. What one saw revealed the basic hunger and subsisting urges for the good. What one saw was the subsisting lure and appeal of classical music in India. What one saw was the sincerity of the Sabha intent on providing the best. What one saw was the *Nishkamya*, genuine service-oriented efforts of the Board of Trustees and the Managing Committee and the Vidyalaya. Many agreed that these varied with the environment in other places. A Bharati would have presented a song or two in appreciation.

By the grace of God and thanks

to the Sabha, I was enabled to drink the musical *rasa* of the concerts and the proceedings and gather some enlightenment. I am also grateful to Sri S. Seshadri, the Convenor for permitting me to present the symbolic honour to him for his dedicated hard work for decades and for a cause. Two days in the Swarga Loka and Viswanathan and two other friends escorted me to the airport true and safe.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Unheard [or unfounded?] rumours:

##### At Mumbai:

Participant: "Tondaradipodi Azhwar sang, 'Acchuvai perinum venden' declining to accept salvation preferring the worship of the Lord at Srirangam itself. Magnificent are the proceedings here! I would love to remain even as the Azhwar had preferred!"

##### At Chennai Airport:

Lord Krishna was waiting in *mufti*. 'My humble *namaskars*', I submitted recognizing Him. He was surprised to have been recognized. I continued:

'Papanasam Sivan, the great soul, has committed a mistake in describing You as *Eerezhulagam padaittavan*'.

Seeing the query on His face, I clarified, 'I am coming from the 15th Loka ie., Shanmukhananda Sabha You created but he forgot'.

'Naughty old boy. Am I not *nada brahman*? Do I not pervade the whole world? Shanmukhananda Sabha is my favourite abode at Mumbai'.

With profound *namaskars* to the first flautist, I exited fearing further chastisement for impertinence.

## "MANODHARMA IN ACADEMIC FOLD"\*

(Accent on Raga Darshan)

- Hindustani Vocal

by Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas

"Manodharma" is a very important prerequisite for embarking on a serious study of any subject. Manodharma is such an encompassing state of mind that it not only contains "aptitude", "interest", "liking" or "desire", but the very urge which comes from within your heart and mind, to pursue a goal which becomes the very purpose of your life. The word "Dharma" is indicative of this process.

Music, as we all know, develops in two areas, academic and creative, with aims at culminating in better and "satisfying" performance. Although music is considered basically a performing art, it has underneath it a dominating aspect of science or theory of its basic concepts that give a shape, form and content for its presentation or performance. In its performance, music



Dr. Vidyadhar Vyas with Pt. Paresch Jana(Harmonium) & Milind Joshi(Tabla)

Dharma does not mean just following a ritual with religious submission. Dharma aims at orienting and reorienting your way of life, the very purpose of your life, around the study of desired subject and spreading this study among the most receptive minds and passing it onto such developing minds of the next generations.

has to rise from its basic grammar, specifications of form and elevate itself and the listeners to the heights of aesthetic and sublime experiences. Musical notes sung or played combinations are great storehouse of emotions, moods and energies that drive us to unsurpassable experiences.

Indian system of Music presents

\* Paper presented at "Music Symposium - 2001" of Shanmukhananda.



a unique phenomenon of notes combination or order of combinations called Ragas. This concept of Ragas gives great importance to the Manodharma of its performer or presenter. Also, it is not just the Manodharma of the performer, but the Ragas also are considered to have their particular Manodharma. Ragas are believed to have specific Rasa and Bhavas. Again in Hindustani system, Ragas are associated with season, time of the day or night and different occasions in the life of individual person as well as society. While learning a Raga, one has to learn and imbibe its Manodharma along with its various nuances of expression. When the Manodharma of the performer gets tuned with the Manodharma of the Raga, then its performance creates perceptible wonders.

Ragas are considered to be human like entities, possessing a typical character, behaviour, a way to move about with internal responses of various harmonic phrases. All these are the reflections of the Manodharma of the Ragas. The Manodharma of Raga shows different shades with different phrases, their combinations, the

compositions, the rhythm, etc. And all this has to be in great harmony with the Manodharma of the performer. When these match, then only the performance can be called successful.

Another unique feature of the Ragas, indicative of their Manodharma is that they are supposed to have some objectives in their presentations. It is like - Yaman Kalyan or Malkauns have certain objectives of achievement in their presentation. So also Bageshri, Kalavathi, Darbari, Marva and Bhairavi and so on.

I, as a student, teacher and performer of Music, strongly feel and believe that the Manodharma is greatly reflected in your trying to be one with the Manodharma of the Raga you are presenting, getting yourself totally immersed in the depth of the Raga, identifying your moods with the different moods and Bhavas of the compositions, the Swara-Sangatīs that they present and responding to the various "Upaj" or creative flourishes that the Ragas and compositions inspire. These are really the different facets of Manodharma which are the unique feature of our music.



## "NURTURING MANODHARMA IN TIME-FRAMED TRAINING" \*

(KARNATIC VOCAL)  
By Prof. T. R. Subramanian



(Prof. T. R. Subramanian)

It is customary in doctoral research papers to start by defending the wordings of the topic first. It seems to me that the rather unusual topic that we have today needs a similar approach even here. The first word of the topic impresses me.

*Manodharma sangeeta* is a phenomenon that exists in only one system of music in this world and that is our Indian music. For instance, it is probably well known to everybody that there is no *raga alapana* in western music. The concept of *raga* and *raga alapana* is as unique and crowning glory of our music. *Raga alapana* occupies an important place in the field of *manodharma*. By the word *manodharma* we mean that part of music which is not learnt, memorized or rehearsed and

sung by rote that would happen only in presenting the various compositions which are available in plenty in Karnatic music. Every *krti* is learnt by any number of repetitions from a teacher. The lyric of the compositions and the structure of the music in which they are woven are memorized and being able to sing even long compositions without the necessity of some guiding notes on a paper or note book is considered a good achievement in a musician. There are in fact old timers even today who consider it sacrilegious for a Karnatic musician to refer to written notes while singing. This is in direct contrast with the situation in Western music where there is always a provision for every participant in the symphony to readily refer to written or even printed notes kept ready on a stand particularly intended for the purpose. This one aspect alone is enough to show Indian and Western music apart.

Singing or playing compositions is only a part of presentation of Indian music. A bulk of the performance here consists of the other unique portion called *manodharma sangeeta* the main branches of which are *raga alapana*, *swara kalpana*, *niraval* and *thanam*. These aspects are not committed to memory as in the case of singing of compositions. *Manodharma sangeeta* should at best sprout from the individual imagination of every performer. *Raga alapana* continues to baffle the Western musicians even today. They just cannot imagine music happening in a person and coming out extempore. This unique

\* Paper presented at Shanmukhananda 'Music Symposium - 2001'

intuition rather than tuition. There should be the requisite musicianship in a person to attempt *raga alapana* or any branch of *manodharma*. It must be clear that such type of *manodharma sangeeta* cannot be "taught". There should be the stuff in the learner by nature which can be "nurtured". This is the reason why I am impressed by the inclusion of the word "nurture" in the topic.

Another noteworthy portion of the topic is the inclusion of the word "time-frame". Traditionally the music fraternity has been notorious for its freedom from time consciousness. The time honoured *gurukula* system in any subject particularly music never had a time table or concrete schedule in the process of teaching. There have also been no examinations, grades, or awarding of any particular diploma or degree. All these have crept in only in the evolution of institutional teaching. Attendance, periodic examinations and awarding of marks and certificates are all very natural in institutions and these were unknown in the *gurukula* system, where the word time frame would sound a misfit. There are old timers today who would still swear by the *gurukula* system only.

There are plus and minus points in any system of learning and an objective person should evaluate the *gurukulam* also in this background. Comparing and contrasting the merits and demerits of the various systems of learning music is a big topic in itself that would need a separate seminar and this is not the time to go into it in detail. This inclusion of the word "time frame" in the topic seems to me to indicate that I am supposed to dwell on the methodologies undertaken in institutions. I seem to have been chosen for the topic because

of my having been a teacher in Delhi University for a full three decades.

Granting that there is specific methodology for promoting *manodharma* in institutional curricula, I would like to point out to the learned audience that the approach to meet the situation should be totally practical-oriented that would just defy being conveyed in written or spoken words. My responsibilities are thus further enhanced. I can however manage by giving an account of all the problems faced in the long career as a university man.

A problem common to all institutions is that there is no guarantee of a minimum level of talent among the entrants. No bright student or his/her parents would be keen on doing a graduate course in music with the same eagerness with which they would go in for Engineering, Medicine, Computer Science and the like. Even students richly talented in music are admitted into some job-oriented course and music is sought at home through private tuition. Syllabus is a must for institutions and there is an unreal expectation that the quantum expected in the syllabus can be digested by all the students who get admitted to a course. The major handicap in the institutions is that only a minority among the students will have the talent to grasp what is taught in the requisite speed. Pulling the back-benchers along would consume time and the teacher will not be able to complete the syllabus. It is a sad fact that this is the case even in the theory section in most universities. Many of the topics in theory are left uncovered either for want of quick grasp by the students or because the topic is tough and new even to the teachers.

There is a wide spread complaint that universities never produce

performing musicians. To a large extent this has been found to be true also. Theorists usually boss the situation in universities and they are more particular about the large volume of theory portions in the syllabus. Only a minor share is allotted to practical music. Even while appointing the teachers only their degrees and other paper qualifications are insisted upon and not performing ability. Universities thus have more of theorists as teachers and they in turn produce more and more of musicologists with little or no aptitude for practical music.

*Manodharma* is the first casualty in this vicious circle. Teaching in *Karnatic* music generally covers teaching of compositions only and any specific or systematic methodology for initiating into *manodharma* has not been taken up seriously at all in *Karnatic* music. *Kelvi gnanam* is the standard prescription for acquiring *manodharma*. The teachers seem to forget that the student is much younger and immature and what to grasp by listening to whom is a matter where the student would genuinely need guidance.

*Manodharma* is creativity and only the best among students will have stuff that can be nurtured. All students need not have a natural flair for all branches of *manodharma*. My experience has given me an option that the foreigners are able to grasp lessons in rhythm faster than Indians though they are relatively slow in grasping our *gamakas*. My experience has also taught me to take up *kalpanaswaras* first before going in for other aspects of *manodharma*. One reason for this might be that a structure of solfa notes is a more concrete presentation than the same structure presented as phrase of a *raga*. That a single *kalai Adi talam* is made up of

thirty-two swaras and articulating swaras in that frame of thirty-two notes per cycle is something that all students can comprehend logically. Our veterans are generally against any importance being given to arithmetical approach in *kalpana swaras*, but the so-called non-arithmetical *sarva laghu* would demand a highly experienced person which the students are not.

**Demonstration of initiation into Swara Kalpana with a student ...**

*Raga alapana* can be taken up next. Almost all the good singers of *raga* have acquired the skill only by the impact they had from the *alapanas* of the famous musicians in the field particularly their favourites. *Raga alapana* is an edifice of sound and it cannot be woven and "arrived at" like *swara kalpana*. Students at the university level will be familiar with *gopucchha* and *srotovaha yathis*. These *yathis* can be gainfully employed both in *kalpana swarams* and in *raga alapanas*.

**Demonstration ...**

One common hurdle in acquiring fluency in *raga alapana* is the unfamiliarity in students in employing the syllables *tha da ri na* effectively. Many students feel shy of freely using these syllables while they are able to readily sing the phrases of the *raga* that occur in a composition, obviously because of the familiarity with the words in the lyric. A good teacher must make the students use the *tha da ri na* syllables with abandon and demonstrate how phrases acquire an assertive shape when sung with these syllables rather than mere *akaram*. Making the students attempt *slokams* and *viruttams* is a solid step towards acquiring the ability to do *raga alapana*.

With Best Compliments from

# PANKAJ MERCANTILE

101, Everest House,  
No.6, Suren Road,  
(Near Cine Magic Cinema)  
Andheri (East),  
Mumbai 400 093.

Phones : 821 0615 -16 -17, 821 6800

Fax : (91) (22) 821 06 00

## Demonstration ...

*Ragam Tanam Pallavi* is usually rated as a pinnacle in performing ability. This might be for some reasons, which we will try to analyse now. *Raga alapana* before a *Pallavi* is expected to be a leisurely effort and this calls for more expertise than what is needed in a normal *alapana* before any composition. *Pallavi* is also expected to involve a high level of calculations and other intricacies of *laya*. A true artist would pay more attention to the *niraval* than the other exercises in a *Pallavi*. This again demands richer experience. A student can grasp the *Tanam* easier than the *Niraval*. It is in the *Tanam* that the techniques of *gopuccha* and *srotovaha yathis* are employed to the maximum and this should be brought to the notice of the students. The standard syllables of *Tanam* - *anantha* and *namtha* should be familiarized to the student. *Tanam* again is learnt by attentive listening to not only vocal but also instrumental music by senior artistes.

It is now time to attempt *niraval*. While singing *niraval* attention is needed on many directions like the lyric, *raga bhava* and tightness of rhythm. *Raga alapana* should be less demanding because it has neither the lyric nor the *Tala*. *Niraval* should therefore be last branch of *manodharma* to be attempted. Compositions other than *Pallavis* should be taken for *niraval* in the beginning. Most *niraval* singers go about it intuitively. A strictly scientific method does not seem to have been attempted or evolved. I experimented with one rational step. I asked the students to sing the whole passage of *niraval* in one strong note of the *raga*, say *panchamam* or *shadjam*. In the composition the passage would not have been sung in one and the same note and singing it in one note is itself an attempt at *niraval*. I found that staying for one *avartanam* in

one note was not easy for the students and somewhere in the trail they strayed into neighbouring notes. If the straying is done deliberately that is what *niraval* is supposed to be. Care should however be taken to see that going astray should be to a note or area permitted in the *raga*. *Niraval* in *pallavis* calls for more attention. *Niraval* in a composition and that in a *Pallavi* can be seen apart as the difference in skills needed to stitch a pillow-case and a shirt.

All branches of *manodharma* have now been taken up for analysis. But one important aspect of the topic still remains uncovered. That is the "time-frame". I am afraid no teacher will venture to train any student to any level of musicianship within a guaranteed period. It is common for parents to go and inquire with a musician "in how much time can you make my child give a performance"? The answer to this question has never been other than evasive and much depends upon the talent, aptitude and hard working tendency of the student. If a commitment to time frame is elusive even for a single student how can there ever be a precise formula for nurturing *manodharma* in time frame training?

Experience has taught me that there is no specific methodology for time-framed coaching in *manodharma*. How are the various universities functioning then? My reply to this question may not be complimentary to the many universities that have music departments. All these institutions have rules and norms with provision for infinite compromise and they manage to "some how" put up a show and go on record as having produced so many graduates and post graduates in music. With active association with so many universities in India and abroad I feel like having got used to the wide belief that universities are not the places to produce performing artistes of high merit.

## PROFESSOR VISWESWARAN

**'Vellai thamarai poovil iruppal-veenal seyyum oliyil iruppai'** - the beautiful song of Mahakavi Subramania Bharatiyar in praise of Goddess Saraswati is what comes to one's mind when we hear Prof. Visweswaran's veena recital.

Renowned Veena Maestro from

Dikshitar school. He has also created a few new Ragas like *Enakshi*, *Smriti*, *Antarakshi* and *Rajarajeshwari* with compositions in the same.

Number of honours and titles like *'Sangeeta Sarvabhooma'*, *'Gaana kala abhooshana'*, *'Layakalaanipuna'*, adorn his name. In



(Vainika Vidwan Prof. Visweswaran)

Mysore, Prof. Visweswaran has developed his own technique of handling this instrument in vocal style. He is a musicologist and well known for his practice-oriented lectures in Musicology. He is also a music composer with over a hundred compositions in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada to his credit. His study of Dikshitar's musical style has given his compositions the musical flair of the

1991 he won the National Award for his special musical feature conceived and produced for the All India Radio to commemorate 'World Music Day'.

An M.A. in Indology, Shri Visweswaran has served as Professor and Head of Music department in the University of Mysore. He has trained many students, some of whom are distinguished performers.

Theodore Thomas of California, USA has produced a documentary film on the artiste. The Professor has released many cassettes and CDs.

**How were you initiated into the music world?**

I hail from a music family. Once when my elder brother Sri Sitaram was giving a vocal concert, I was singing Kalpana Swaras outside the hall and my mother happened to hear it. I was hardly 5 years old then. She realised my innate talents and initiated me into vocal training under my brother. My second elder brother was learning veena. I somehow did not like his style of playing and insisted that his handling was not in vocal style. Irritated by my comments, he challenged me to play and show, which, to my great surprise, I did. That was the time when I started playing the Veena. I have not received any formal training from any Guru. My vocal music is my guru for my veena handling.

**Veena playing techniques have always been under continuous criticisms with each school claiming its style is the only correct one. What is your opinion?**

It is true that the style of handling this instrument varies from artiste to artiste due to different gurus but I have no right to comment. I definitely like the vocal style of presentation by Karaikudi Brothers and Sri Kalyana Krishna Bhagavathar. Sri S Balachander is another great virtuoso who honoured me and whose style I consider as of great repute.

**There are Dasavidha Gamakas and different Tanams. Are they actually practised by the Vainikas?**

According to me there are 15 types of Gamakas, more sophisticated and viable. Also, there are various patterns of Tanam rendering. It is called '*makarni*' in the Shastras. A Tanam is pure rhythm with variations in the matrix of the rhythm. There are also '*nada*' jatis in Tanam and '*tri-kala*' Tanam. I always play the Tanam in three speeds and I can certainly say that I have not heard other Vainikas play so

**Is vocal music important for an instrumentalist?**

In the field of instrumental music, one cannot hear the *sahitya*. One can only hear the tune. Thus if the artiste has not the knowledge about the *sahitya*, the music played will be mere tonal effect devoid of any *Bhava*. Our great composers have given us a treasure of music compositions abounding in meaningful *sahityas* (or words) which bring out their sentiments and feelings. When we learn vocal music, we learn the *sahitya* and sing the song according to the sentiment it reveals. We will not sing a sad song in a jovial way and vice versa. Our great composers have even taken the appropriate Raga to depict the sentiment of the song. So if an instrumentalist learns vocal music first, then alone will he be able to play the Kritis properly to bring out the *Bhava* of the song. The sentiment of the song has to flow from the artiste's heart to the instrument through his/her fingers and resound through the melody of the instrument and reach out to the listener. In vocal music alone can one perceive the '*anu swaras*' or the gamakas and microtones. The study and application of such nuances and meanderings alone will give a gayaki or vocal style to the instrumental music. Hence I certainly emphasise on this fact that vocal music is a must for any instrumentalist whether the artiste can sing well or not.

**Can you explain how one perfects the art of playing the 'Raga' on the Veena which unfortunately lacks continuity in its tone?**

Here again let me emphasise that only vocal music will help. You mention the lack of continuity on this instrument. This is where the artiste's capacity shows. What is it that brings in continuity in vocal music? It is the '*anu swaras*' and modulations that ushers in continuity and connection. In the same way, when we play the veena, we pull the string on the same fret and reach out to all the swaras within that particular fret thus encompassing all the subtle micro tones. This is a *gamaka*. This is similar to the way in which we stretch our vocal chords to outline a Raga phrase



In order to understand how the *Gamakas* are to be played and within what limits, one should study the Raga's *Jeeva* swaras. For this one should learn as many *Kritis* as possible in each Raga to understand how it has been shaped and which particular swaras are given importance. In fact let me tell you, by studying the commencement of a Raga in different compositions and putting them together in a discrete sequence we can form a mini *Alapana* by itself. Thus Ragas are the anchors of our music which is creative-oriented and hence cannot be taken for granted and subjected to gimmickery. Regarding 'continuity' on the veena, let me tell you that I have played an entire *Alapana* on my veena without plucking the string even once.

**Could this feat be attributed to the fact that you use a 'contact mike' or rather a 'magnetic' mike?**

It is true that the 'contact' mike or a 'magnetic' mike helps in enhancing the sound volume of the veena. But at the same time it can and will definitely enhance the 'apaswaras' played too. The mikes are only gadgets to help overcome the volume limitation of this instrument. They are not going to play the Raga *Alapana* for us. I use the magnetic mike which is set close to the strings and help prolong the sound. But the main discussion is regarding the vocal style of *Alapana* to be played on the veena and how I go about it. As I said earlier, the student must learn to sing and study the vocal contours and try to play it likewise on the veena.

**Keeping this continuity limitation of the Veena in mind, how feasible would you find the suggestion that the Veena should be used as an accompaniment for a vocalist?**

In the olden days, Veena was more of a side instrument in the sense that the Veena player used to sing and at the same time play on the instrument. The Veena has never been used as an accompaniment as a Violin is used. It cannot also be used so for various reasons. First of all the playing area on the Violin is very small and this enables the artiste to glide the fingers very fast along with the fast *Brigas*

of the vocalist. This also helps the player to handle all the three octaves easily without strain. Secondly the Violin has a natural continuity which augers well with vocal music. Thirdly, the bowing technique on the Violin is less complicated and less taxing than the plucking technique on the veena which restricts speed. Last but not the least, the *shruti* or scale range for the Veena is set at a particularly lower pitch in order to enable the player to play *Gamakas* which need the strings to be pulled. On the Violin, *gamakas* are played by sliding the fingers across the strings. Thus a Violin can be raised or lowered to any pitch in accordance with the vocalist's demands. Thus using a Veena as an accompaniment for any vocalist is not a viable thing.

**You have been both a performing artiste and a great teacher. Do you face any difficulties while teaching to play this instrument?**

The vocal technique of 'imitation' is not possible here. One has to show the fingering technique for each phrase because unlike in vocal music where it is just hearing and repeating, here it is hearing, seeing and performing on the instrument. To reach perfection is difficult and a time consuming affair. I follow the 'gayaki' style, so I insist that my students should know vocal music. Then it makes it easier for me to teach the 'gamakas' on the instrument. All in all it is more in the student's hand to take interest to learn what the Guru teaches and practise sincerely.

**A common question which I make it a point to ask every musician - what do you have to say about this modern trend of fusion music?**

In the modern times, good things are happening no doubt in many areas of education. At the same time worse things are also happening. One is so called 'fusion music' involving different styles of music. All in all it can only result in utter 'confusion'. Especially if Karnatic music is involved there would only be a resultant mutilation of this music. In fusion music there are more losses

than gains and the maximum loss would be for Karnatic music. I will tell you the reason. During fusion, we can only play or sing light Ragas like Hindolam, for example. How can our *Gamaka* - oriented music be fused with the scale - oriented music? Can we sing or play Ragas 'Yadukulakambhoji' or 'Nayaki' in fusion music?

**Besides music what are your other interests in life?**

I like photography. But my wife Usha is a painter of repute. She conducts exhibitions of her water colour and still life paintings. She has also held an exhibition of her own concepts of the Trinity with their deities in the background.

**Finally, can you give valuable advice to the aspiring youngsters in the music world?**

Classical Karnatic music is a beauty in complexity. To understand this system in depth one needs to have a 'madi' [pure] attitude. If one dives deep then one can surely come up with value. Never take Ragas and composers lightly or for granted. Try to learn good music so select a good teacher. 'Shraddha' is the keynote and 'humility' is the yardstick. While learning or performing one should have the same respect and 'Bhakti' towards 'Sangeetam' or music as we have for the deities during 'Pooja'.

There should be continuous self - examination and self - assessment which will lead to self - criticism. Never compromise on art value for mundane gains. Ultimately the attitude of 'T'-ness should vanish and humility should rule.

- Lalitha A. Bharadwaj

## "SHANMUKHA"

A Quarterly Publication of

"Sri Shanmukhananda Sabha"

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Life Member India	Rs. 500.00
Annual (for 4 Issues)	Rs. 40.00
Annual for foreign Subscribers	Rs. 500.00 + Rs. 400 (Postage)
Price per Current Issue	Rs. 10.00
Price per Back Issue	Rs. 5.00

SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (Regd.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Sion East, Mumbai - 400 022

Payment by Demand Draft in favour of  
Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha.

# SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Mumbai-400 022.  
 Phones : 407 88 88 / 403 02 13 / 401 51 64 / Fax : 409 22 11  
 E-Mail : shanmugananda@hotmail.com  
 Website : www.shanmukhananda.org.in

## MANAGING COMMITTEE - 2001 - 2002

**PRESIDENT**  
 Shri. V. Shankar

Dr. V. Subramanian  
 (President - Emeritus)

**VICE PRESIDENTS**  
 Shri B. G. Deshmukh  
 Shri Sadanand Shetty

**HON. SECRETARIES**  
 Shri V. S. Amarnath Suri  
 Shri V. Rangaraj

**HON. TREASURER**  
 Shri R. R. Rao

## MEMBERS

Shri S. Seshadri  
 Shri Jayaram Mani  
 Shri R. Narayanan  
 Shri K. Kannan  
 Shri T. Raghavan Sarathy  
 Shri P. S. Subramanian

Shri R. Sridhar  
 Dr. K. S. Varadhachary  
 Shri S. Venkatachalam  
 Shri S. S. Rajan  
 Smt. Kamala Krishnan  
 Smt. Viji Iyengar

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**CHAIRMAN**  
 Shri V. Shankar

**VICE-CHAIRMAN**  
 Shri N. Parameswaran

**HON. SECRETARY**  
 Shri Jayaram Mani

**HON. TREASURER**  
 Shri V. H. Jaya Rao

## TRUSTEES

Shri N. V. Iyer  
 Dr. K. S. Varadhachary  
 Shri P. R. Krishnamoorthy

Shri S. Seshadri  
 Shri S. Venkiteswaran  
 Shri T. Vijayaraghavan

# SANGITA NIDHI & SIKSHA

By 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan I.A.S.(Retd.)

(Published below are some thought-provoking extracts from the Keynote Address delivered by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan at the 2-day "Music Symposium-2001" which deserve contemplation, further exploration and research - Ed)

*Nidhi* is a beautiful, widely popular and constantly canvassed word that conjures and tantalizes one and all and more particularly those in India since sages and seers have from time to time expatiated on the true content and scope of the word in the fields of religion, philosophy, arts, etc. The small word of just two syllables conveys at once allied concepts like 'abode', 'treasure', 'ocean' etc. So, the pregnant term '*Sangita Nidhi*' conveys quite absorbing concepts like abode of music, ocean of music, the musical treasure, etc. This *Sangita Nidhi* has been extensively subjected to classification, definition and codification by musicologists of repute. The choice of such a term and the other themes selected for the symposium reflects not only the glory, grandeur and grandiloquence of music but also the wisdom of the Sabha authorities in choosing one of vast parts, deep penetration and oceanic multi-sided application.

segments, each enjoying the grace and benediction of a goddess - Devi Lakshmi, Devi Saraswathi or Devi Durga - so that, to avail of a modern constitutional phrase, there is a practicable and wise devolution of powers and allocation of business born of sanity among the Trinity of Goddesses avoiding concentration of responsibilities with anyone. The holistic approach has made arts an integral part of Indian life itself. The word *nidhi* consequently brings to focus the swarupas of all the three goddesses, of course, sequentially.

\* \* \*

## Sangita Nidhi

The term '*Sangita Nidhi*' is comprehensive enough to bring within its connotation '*gitam*, '*vadyam* and '*nrttyam*' and all the multi-sided aspects of music such as *raga*, *bhava*, *rasa*, *laya*, *sahitya*, *lakshana* and *lakshya*

Our ancients, with rare vision and robust wisdom, associated *nidhi* with goddesses to endow the comprehensive concept with image and sanctity to be kept in constant full focus. With deep insight and scientific approach, they advanced further and notionally distributed the *nidhi*, which could be equated with *Rajarajeswari* or *Parasakti*, among well conceivable broad

Art is essential for human development as it contributes immeasurably but imperceptibly like a drop in the ocean, to the evolution of good and noble character in people in an enviable overall way. "Art fosters the spiritual growth of humanity", observed *Sangita Kalanidhi* T. Balasaraswathi, the *Bharatanatyam* legend.

"The aim of an art is to evoke an aesthetic appeal in the mind of the connoisseur and Indian theories of aesthetics have holistic

approach taking into consideration physiological and psychological considerations", says Dr. Ramaratnam.

*Sangita*, strictly speaking, falls within the sphere of Devi Saraswati or Matangi who reigns and rules the domain of the science and art of music and the knowledge and wisdom relevant thereto. This apportionment of roles could not, of course, be rigid or mutually exclusive since wisdom, wealth and power are complementary to each other and there is an in-built element of each in the other. Thus one comes across references to 'Reservoirs of intellectual prowess and of wealth'. 'Wealth of wisdom', 'Wise handling of wealth and power', 'Wealth backed by power', or *vice versa* drawing inspiration, know-how, content and authority from each other.

It is perhaps relevant here to note, in illustration, how the venerable Abhirami Bhattar of Tirukkadayur fails not to highlight the musical image and wisdom of Goddess Abhirami [Durga]. Delectably and passionately the great soul sings:

Pan kalikkum kural, veenaiyum kaiyum,  
payodaramum...  
Em Perumatti tan perazhage!  
[Eye-devouring Beauty! She is but my  
venerable Goddess!  
She wields the veena.  
Her voice is musically rich with raga bhava  
and sweetness of tone.]

Is Goddess of Power, Durga, then a vocalist enjoying the wealth of golden, mellifluous voice? 'She wields the veena too', adds Bhattar significantly. H.H. Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal has said, 'Pradosha Stotra

has linked all divinities with music and musical instruments. Lord Parameswara seats Devi Parvati on the pedestal and performs dance called *Sandya Tandavam* before her with all the *devas* providing the orchestra. Saraswati plays the veena called Vallaki; Indira plays the flute; Brhma handles the jalra [cymbals] and Lakshmi takes to vocal music. As percussionist Nandikeswara lost himself in the beauty of the dance [or was 'on other duty'] and did not play his usual role. Vishnu takes to percussion-mridangam. Adi Sankara in *Sivananda Lahari* mentions '*mrdanga vahata*' referring to this. Thus on the *Pradosha* days, Devi Durga is the supreme *rasika* and the Chief Guest not participating in the dance with her *lasya*. [After all if all are actors, who is to be the *rasika*?]. In the musical field, she is called the Raja Matangi. She is a *vainika* also - *Veena sankranta kanta hastaam*. Devi Abhirami is thus held out as a *vainika-gayaki*, *Sangita Gana Vilasini*. Dikshitar hails her as Raja Matangi in his epoch-making song *Minakshi me mudam dehi - Raja Matangi*. We can win over her grace by playing on veena with chaste music!'

Mention is made here of Devi Abhirami to lend focus on the fact that the Trinity of Goddesses, viz., Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati together complement each other and constitute together the Incarnation of the supreme Parasakti since Sakti cannot be comprehensive, complete and absolute sans any of the aspects which the goddesses individually represent and symbolize to attain Purnatvam. Adi Sankara, in his *Prasnottara Ratnamalika*, to the question, "*Ka cha Paradevatokta?*", answers, "*Sich Saktih*"

- *Jnanasakti Ambika*.

Music is sweet, appealing and satisfying only when the blessing of all the three is present. Because such a blessing was there, Tirukkodikaval Krishna Ayyar, the violin maestro of the past, 'was able to play to the amazement and admiration of vidwans the Viriboni Varnam (Bhairavi) in three degrees of speed on a single string!'

*Sangita nidhi*, the theme chosen for the 'Music Symposium 2001', comprises and covers the domains and interplay of all the three goddesses.

(The 'GSLV-D1' March 2001 confirmed this. Lakshmi! Surely there was no whisper of her absence. Saraswati! Her presence there had been acknowledged. Still it failed to take off for want of the vital energy, the thrust that is *sine qua non*. The presence and power of Durga were deficient then and so it failed to take off.)

Deficiency in or dominance of one to the exclusion or detriment of one or the other, robs the music of its grace, appeal and thrill.

Why and How?

Some musicians not only steal the heart of the *rasikas* momentarily at the concert but also endow and enrich the *rasikas*'s musical wealth enabling him to carry home melodic, fragrant impressions to recall, cherish and enjoy in leisure for long. Some artistes create and leave behind a style or *bani* and inscribe their names in the verdant pages of the history of the art. The musician's *sangita nidhi* has necessarily to be like the lotus stem in the pond. Even as the length of lotus adjusts itself to the varying water levels of the tank, as pointed out in the Tamil poem '*Kulattalave aagumaam*

*niraambal ...*', the musician's presentation is circumscribed or qualified by the *sangita nidhi* and the stock of manodharmic flights he has acquired and the quantum of inspiration that makes itself available on the occasion. How does a musician achieve his individual status? Is it due to -

hereditary, genes,  
individual genius,  
training under a great guru,  
concentrated practice and exposure or  
just luck? Or all?

This needs to be explored to lay the "Raja Marga" for success.

Manodharma

This is a fascinating term with pregnant connotation; *Manodharma* is, in fact, the Kurukshetra of the finest of fine arts where the *manasikha* battle is fought at the intellectual level with multitudes of soft arms like *raga*, *tala*, *sahitya*, *laya*, *bhava-rasa*, *brikas*, *sancharas*, *sangatis* and many more. The word itself, perhaps, is a combination of absolute independence according to the dictates of the mind and of constraints circumscribed by canons of musical dharma. Indian music delights in its lavish dependence on manodharmic, inspirational melody and it is its *tour de force*. Concerts of acknowledged top veterans like Maharajapuram Viswanatha Ayyar have sometimes failed to take off while those of some freshers have kept the audience spell-bound. It is like acknowledged batsmen and bowlers 'losing the touch' and failing to make their mark while some incognito steps in towards the close and robs all the laurels. Many a

flower is born to blush unseen; some flowers flatter for a brief-while and fade out while some attain immortality like the lotus. And this is seen in the field of music too not infrequently.

Connoisseurs recollect many cases to highlight the points. Those types of fading out and disappearing or totally failing to register even initially may presumably be due to the momentary presence or absence or desertion mainly of one of the factors of *sangita nidhi*, viz., the vital wealth of *manodharmic* inspiration and thrust that tend to elude now and then even the veteran. Affluent and enlightened *sangita nidhi* may, without doubt, be there but still, like a frozen bank account, there is an indescribable vacuum, desertion of inspiration off and on. What is in the pot does not come in the ladle and what is in the ladle does not flow out into the plate! *Manodharmic* inspiration eludes or deserts and the concert fails to take off in consequence as fondly wished for.

\*\*\*

### Aesthetics

"Aesthetic sensibility is not just an inspired state of mind but involves a conscious cultivation of the mind. There is an undercurrent of philosophy and logic in the concept of aesthetics." - observed Sudharani Raghupathy, the Bharata Natyam exponent.

*Dhvani* connotes the basic meaning of sound as well as the suggested *bhava* or the emotional significance of it in the context of the mode of its expression. Even the rustic drummer in rural corners adopts different beats to announce a public message, a funeral and the like. Individual ragas and laya instill or suggest diverse

emotions. Lyrical beauties constitute a fertile field for implied or suggestive emotions. Every word like 'Oho', action like a smile, or a Karana carries different connotations according to circumstances. This is a very fascinating, arresting theme.

The definition of *Sangita* - "*Gita vadyam cha nrtyam thryam sangitam ucchyate*" is comprehensive. Eminent musicologists have from time to time codified knowledge and practice to fine-tune inherited *sampradaya lakshana* in the context of fresh departures made in pursuit of *lakshya*. When the mighty Ravana chanted the musical *Sama Veda* with his on-the-spot improvised veena, it was so sweet that the Cosmic Dancer who weilds the *damaru*, the Lord of Kailas, had perforce to relent. The instant resort to chanting of *Sama Veda* and the use of an improvised veena denote the prevailing cultured atmosphere fully saturated with vocal and instrumental music, know-how on manufacture of instruments and knowledge of their utility. The epics in different languages are treasure-houses of references to arts. Ever since, the reservoir of music [*sangita nidhi*] has been expanding and enlarging in scope and content, use and utility with the advance of time, space, art-conscious population, communications and other factors. A gracious, virile art like *manodharmic sangitam* could neither be stagnant nor ever reach finality. After all beauty and perfection enjoy varied levels.

\*\*\*

Many advents and episodes had been narrated testifying to the inexplicable lure, immense power and

colossal relevance of music for education, enlightenment and elevation in religious and spiritual endeavours. In fact, Indian music could not have survived the long, sorrowful political hiccups during a millennium and over [Orayiram aandu maandu kidandadu - Bharati] and prospered to dizzy heights but for its association with religion and spiritual pursuits from the beginning.

\*\*\*

Indian Music prospered through millennia and warded off the onslaught of unmusical hordes ..... because of its firm-moorings in far flung villages.

The robust art flourished because of *Karna Parampara* - the oral tradition.

The oral background not only enabled the art and science to remain insured against onslaught but helped in the development of its *tour de force* - the *Manodharmic* soul and content. Nay, greater the lack of sovereign patronage, greater had been the instinct to ensure the preservation of the soul of music as was witnessed during the Bhakti and Freedom Movements. *Karna Parampara* ought to have been the basic reason for the *Manodharmic aspect of Indian Music*.

Music lured its votaries, particularly in the past, not because it promised a mine of economic affluence or held out a sure avenue of professional prosperity but because of its innate merits and appeal to a musically talented nation and its relevance for spiritual progress

The *nidhi*(arts) mostly survived the ravages of times since they were the sacred possessions and prestige of these segments of society (such as

Panar, Melakarars like Isai Velalars etc.) mostly scattered in rural parts.

The Indian was [and is, to a large extent] not only spiritually oriented but has been a passionate lover of music.

The cultural rural venue and the leisurely environment perennially provided the needed wealth of Gurus, apprentices, aspirants, location, time, leisure, facilities, environment, occasion and scope. Domestic, social, religious, political and other functions flourished with music - vocal and instrumental - dance, dramas, etc. Everything was in fine mettle, conducive to the prosperity of arts.

Post-World War condition has seen not only exploding accelerated increase in population but accelerated urbanisation too. The days of Uthukkadu, Tamil Trinity, Maharajapuram, Umayalpuram, Lalgudi, Palghat, etc., claiming the top echelons in the field are nearing their end. One sees, like war-time govts, Lalgudis at Chennai, Maharajapurams at Chennai, etc. In the next few decades, these conjuring original homes of musical efflorescence would also slip out of notice and memory. Already one comes across "New Jersey X", "Hongkong Y", and "Dubai Z". Unlike the past, many artistes have interest in avocations other than music too. Few of the younger generation believe in putting all the career eggs in the musical basket.

Further, how far foreign interest in classical Indian music would last with the diminishing first generation [say with 100% Indian orientation] and second generation [50% - 25% orientation] of migrants and how far the present interest would survive and continue when they



yield the mantle to a fresh crop of people born and bred outside is for notice, since foreign trips do help the prosperity and popularity as well as the affluence of the art and the artistes.

### Musical Drought:-

The great negative development in recent decades is the absolute drought of music in its original habitat, viz., Indian villages and rural towns. There are few Gurus and fewer Sishyas. Nagaswara, the sheet-anchor of musical presence earlier in villages, is following the way of Kalakshepas, Upanyasas, dramas (Therukkoothus) and rural arts like Bommalatham. Nagaswara Vidwans are dwindling in numbers, and few temples, deprived of their income from property, have capacity to retain them. The musical atmosphere which was aided by these and by Bhajans etc., is fast fading out. Live music is a rare product in rural towns and villages and surely this inspired, melodic, Manodharmic music could not sustain itself for long and flourish in crowded, noisy moorings. Neither the Gurus could shift back to villages nor could villages replenish the decadent musical spirit. The apparent affluence in select cities is apt to be illusive and transitory. The demand for good music from overseas Indians is apt to witness Avarohana with succeeding generations born and bred in alien countries.

A concert outside metropolitan cities is a forlorn cry. Perhaps musicians, sponsors and institutions can arrange for concerts in rural temples whose ample corridors (Paharas) provide the best avenues and just a few benches and mikes would be needed. The experience

of festivals at Tiruvarur, Chidambaram, and Tiruvaiyaru shows that such concerts by visiting musicians *without tickets* would delay, if not boost, the sagging musical spirits and fading out instincts.

This is an issue in which all - veterans and other artistes - could lend help as their dedication to the Goddess of Music.

\* \* \*

### Gurukulavasa

This ancient institution which was the pride of India from epic dates till the first half of the last century, is dead. In the context of urban orientation, this institution cannot be revived. The students choose their preceptors for a time, for particular songs, for particular subjects, etc., and it is mostly a students' market and it could only be so in urban areas and conditions. Some finish off training with a song or two from a maestro to be called as his disciple ignoring others who had done the student much good earlier.

#### Guru-sishya:

'Ko guruh?' - Who is a guru? In his *Prasnottara Ratnamalika*, Adi Sankara answers

'Adhigatatatvah; sishyahitaayodyatas  
satatam'

[It is he who knows the truth and work always for the upbringing of his disciples.]  
*Kutra vidheyo yatto?* - One should endeavour for what?

"*Vidyaabhyase, salaushate daate*"  
[For education, good medicine and charity.]

Next to the topics of *mukti* and *bhakti*, India has specialized and excelled in probes on the ancillary topic of *guru-sishya* relationship and the exalted image of the *guru*. Ancient lore has material on all aspects of the subject and

illustrious *gurus* and *shishyas* have been held out as models. Sage Sukha was Brhmajñani even on birth while Vamadeva was *Garbhajñani*. Sri Tirujñansambandar sang as a child and his entire musical output and mission were complete as he reached the age of Sri Markandeya. Their illustrious lives act as manifestation of genius in the fields of education and training.

Venerable Patanjali, who is reputed to be an incarnation of Adishesha, told his disciple,

'Whatever I know shall be yours' and the transfer of knowledge and wisdom was instantaneous and total in one stroke. [It is akin to the shortest Will in the world which read, "Darling, all that is mine is thine".] But as the disciple had earlier transgressed the code of discipline he was a *brhmarakshas*. With understanding, the preceptor told him.

'You shall get relief when you spot out a competent disciple and teach him well'

Learned and charming Chandra Sarma of Kashmir, who was to be the 'destined' disciple, arrived at the scene by chance and there ensued a nine-day non-stop session of dictation of the *Maha Bhashya*.

[Perhaps, the poetic part of the episode may interest some. Sarma was asked to marry the girl who tended on him when he was in a trance. On his refusal, he was taken to the king. On seeing his beautiful countenance, enlightened bearing and wisdom, king decided to give his daughter to Sarma. When he summoned the minister and whispered on the suitability of the boy as bridegroom, the minister was glad that the king had been so solicitous as to care for the welfare of 'his minister's daughter'. What happened? The motto of *okapatni vratude* was not proclaimed by Tyagaraja then and learned Sarma could avail of no exemption clause since our

Constitution and case-law were not then available. Beauty + Wisdom, it is clear, are dangerous assets in the young! Unwilling Sarma had to bow before royal decree and marry all the three! Did they represent *karma, jnana* and *bhakti margas* or *gita, vadyam, cha nriyam* or *sahitya, sangita* and *laya*? Sarma dutifully [pray let it be unwillingly!] helped each with progeny and left them - as in the suggested episode of Adi-Bhagawan, parents of Sage Tiruvalluvar - on to his destined mission to become Govinda Bhagavadpada, guru to Adi Sankaracharya.]

### Guru Parampara

We hear of illustrious *guru parampara* as in the cases of the doyen of musicians, Padma Vibhushan Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar and maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman. It is indeed a rare and proud privilege and honour without doubt. In respect of such *guru parampara*, Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswati Swamikal had said:

'Wisdom is present in each [of course, in varying degrees] The lamp helps one to see. Without the eye the lamp helps none. Without *manas*, the eyes sees nothing. *Manas* alone is insufficient. *Atma Jyotis* is vital to steady the *manas* so that one can see through the eye with the aid of the lamp. This *atma jyotis* is intellectual wisdom. To enable this *atmajyotis* to shine purposely and effectively, the help of *acharya parampara* is vital. It is this *parampara* which safeguards the treasure of accumulated knowledge [eg. *Sangita nidhi*] as a legacy, ensures its integrity and passes it on to successive generations. The very remembrance of this illustrious *parampara* secures blessings'.

'*Sarvadaabhogatah sadbhiih samudra  
iva sindhubhiih  
Aryassarvasamashchaiva  
sadaikapriyadarsanah*'

[The resort of good men at all times, as the ocean is of rivers, is noble, impartial and ever the one comely person.]

-Sage Narada on Sri Rama in *Ramayana*.

This could apply to anyone of the Classical Karnatic Trinity and many others. Their abodes saw the assembly or the confluence of the truly noble and the best among men. An episode from *Mahabharata* as given by Sri Villiputtur Azhwar:

Karna is wounded and blood gushes out and when Krishna touches him, the blood soils him too. That little contact with drops of the blood of Karna famous for his charity instantaneously make him ask, 'Karna, do you want any favour?' When a moment's contact has that dynamic result of making Krishna take to the charitable stance of Karna, it is easy to understand what great gurus could bestow on their *sishtyas*!

These are mentioned here just to highlight facts like -

Eminent gurus enjoy capability to transfer knowledge instantaneously.

Disciples were bound by mandatory codes of conduct

Disciples had the capacity to receive instructions for days together and gurus enjoyed the capability to dictate and instruct for days continuously.

Acharya parampara invests the seeker of knowledge with image and status and with knowledge enjoying authenticity.

Parampara of preceptors is indeed an asset, a privilege and matter of pride.

The references to the nine-day dictation need not also be doubted. Dr. V. Raghavan says:

'If we look at the Prabandha chapters of Sanskrit treatises on music, we find described there huge edifices of compositions in numerous parts sometimes handling a long series of ragas and talas. Our bygone musical giants went on singing for days together, introducing it for hours, unfolding it a whole night, emphasizing its contours a whole day and crowning it with effects another twenty-four hours! Their capacious minds and the equally capacious minds of connoisseurs then comprehended and digested huge music meals of which we have today no conception.'

Many of the distinguished artistes and connoisseurs here had sat at

concerts of five hours and more till recently and Nagaswara artistes had played for six hours and more in the past. We have records of non-stop flute, violin, mridangam and tabla demonstrations of more than a day in recent years. Gandhiji had fasted for weeks! They enjoyed will power and sustained themselves on the soulful energy, *visranti* and *soukhyam* it afforded. They inherited 'Lakshmana amsa'. Presumably the dictum '*Sevikku unavillai yenil, vayittrukkum eeyapadum*' came into vogue because of the sustaining power of the people and the priorities followed. But these are days of limited over matches and one-day marriages. To provide physical *soukhyam* in the meanwhile, canteens abound.

**Are perfect gurus and perfect sishyas born or made?**

Sri Paramacharya of Kanchi refers to 'Swayampratibhaatavedah' - those who know all on birth. Perhaps it is proper to cite an episode or two on this highly relevant subject. The Krauncha birds, in sweet love, sing sweetly. The male bird falls a victim to the cruel arrow of an unkind hunter and the female utters plaintive cries. The pathetic sight kindles dormant compassion in the heart of the high-souled sage-in-the-making and instantaneously he bursts out with a sloka - his maiden output - much to his own surprise cursing the hunter for separating the two birds while in love. He is startled himself and confides to his pupil:

*Paadabaddhoksharasamas  
tantrilayasamanvitah /  
Sokaartasya pravrtto me sloko  
bhavatu naanyathah //*

[This which has issued from me, suffering from grief, divided into four parts, with the

same number of letters in each, with rhythm and time complete, can but be a sloka alone!]

The dormant spirit of a composer was released. The Adi Kavi was born that instant and Lord Brhma confirmed it to him. Such instances are reported in many cases like the Apostle Sri Sundaramurti Nayanar, Sirkazhi Muthu Tandavar, etc. It has been like unveiling the statue that has already been shaped or releasing the flood waters from reservoir by lifting the sluice gates.

Just another instance of birth of child prodigy composer, Sri Tirujnanasambandar. The father emerging from the tank sees remnants of milk particles on the chubby cheeks of his dear child left on the steps. When questioned, the musical child of intellectual eminence sings, '*Todudaiya sevan*' and floods the spiritual field with its 384 immortal songs before diluting itself in the Infinite just at the tender age of sixteen, when he should be in Plus 2 standard by present standards! Bhaskaracharya and many others illumine the ample pages of Indian history.

Padma Vibhushan Dr. Balamurali Krishna demonstrated his *manodharma* at Bangalore and elsewhere with instant *raga* formulation, instant *sahitya* - composition and instant singing.

If it is to be construed that composers, musicians, etc., are only 'born' it would seriously hamper the popularity and growth of the art and free the bulk of gurus from the field of *siksha*. Let us suppose the presence of a disciple before maestro Lalgudi Jayaraman sitting with a violin.

The guru queries : 'What do you see in front of me?'  
The sishya replies: 'The entire *sangita nidhi* my guru commands, which I am here to inherit with his blessings'.

He is a model student [*uthama sishya*] worthy of his master. Suppose he answers, 'A violin', he could be anything and his future may hang in the balance - on the master's willingness and capability to invest and bring out the best and the students's capability to absorb and assimilate.

## GENES

The above leads to a scientific issue. Conventional understanding and belief on the influence of human genes on behaviour are strong and old. But they are disputed by researchers whose findings are reported to have been published in *Nature* early this year. 'The new evidence seeks to demolish claims that humans are prisoners of their genes and show instead that there are powerful environmental influences vastly more crucial in determining human behaviour and that human beings have exactly the same genes as cats, rats and dogs. The new evidence, not much flattering to egoist humans, has caused ripples in scientific circles and is expected to trigger a debate on the ways of looking at genes and their influence on human behaviour'. *The Hindu*, February 12, 2001.

"Vidwan's son easily becomes a vidwan" as he has been fed to copious musical meals from the cradle and to swim" are common sayings. The report in *Nature* presents something which tends to challenge old belief. It is not

[entirely?] heredity but environment [too?], it says. Heredity is part of environment in most cases. They need not be mutually exclusive. The lives of Papnasam Sivan and many others have relevance to this. Dr. V. Raghavan is *The Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja* has observed.

How far Tyagaraja underwent formal instruction is a different matter. When all the learning [in Vedas, Sastras, Upanishads etc.] lived by word of mouth, was recited, and expounded publicly and the religious congregation and activities were resounding with it, one growing in that atmosphere naturally grew into that learning, called significantly *sruta* in Sanskrit and *kelvi* in Tamil.

#### Voice Culture

In Bhaktapuri Agraharam near the College Bridge, Kumbakonam, there lived in 1954 hotelier Ramadu Ayyar. He took fancy for music too late in life egged on by the prevailing musical atmosphere in the fifties of the last century and began crying hoarse early in the morn and late in the night as he was free from hotel work only then as if proving the truth of the song *Sankatamaana samayalai vittu, sangitam paada poren*. His new-found love of practice was unbearable. But he proved Neville Cardus wrong within six months as the latter had said,

I often wonder how much you can really learn from a singing teacher because singing is such an individual thing. A piano can be tuned. If you break a violin string, you can replace it. But the vocal chord and the whole art of singing are matters of inner physiology and psychology. If you have not been born with a sweet voice, no teacher can help you make it sound beautiful. I do not think any teacher can transform an indifferent voice into even a moderately good one.

President Roosevelt, while young, overcame physical constraints by dedicated swimming. There are other cases too. But in just six months, devilish,

persevered practice did earnest Ramadu Ayyar good. He conquered his turbulent voice and it was considerably acceptable! This brings to mind veterans like Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Ayyar, who was discarded by his principal Tirupazhanam Panchapakesa Sastri with cutting sarcasm, 'Your voice is too good to be just a voice support. You should seek fortunes as a vocalist!' The young man vowed, 'Either I tame my voice and become a matchless vocalist or my arteries shall burst in the effort'. He practised, tamed his voice and did become a star performer. There have been many others who conquered their voice inadequacies. Veterans like Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Ayyar and G. N. Balasubramaniam had faced problems. Polagam Ramayya had voice constraints but that would slowly disappear as concert proceeded. He blossomed into Sangita Kalanidhi Papanasam Sivan and attained immortality through his inimitable songs of grace and beauty quite early in his life. This 'Tamil Tyagaraja', a composer of eminence, perhaps, did not consider it necessary to emulate and echo Tyagaraja's tribute in *Dasarati ni runamu* [Todi] to Rasikamani Sri Rama 'to invest him with the needed inspiration and the capacity to compose songs which confer temporal and spiritual benefits and to popularise and glorify his songs in far-off countries!'] to his hearts content!.

*'Dasarati! Ni runamu...Asadira dura  
desamulanu*

*Prakasimpa jesina, rasikasiromani!*

\* \* \*

#### Lakshana vs Lakshya

There is the perpetual emphasis or contest on the *inter se* primacy of either. As early as 1550 C.E., Bekara

Rama Matya in his *Swara Mela Kalanidhi* had observed:

Music has its theory. It has to abide by it. But in cases where the theory appears to be violated, it is found that the sweetness of the music suffers nothing thereby. Practical music, the basis, is more important than theory. Give it up for the sake of theory, then you lose the pleasant effect due to the art side. Sweet music has lived in this world as an art, because of this.

I remember the learned B. D. Jatti telling me long back that the well-intended Panini's great work took Sanskrit away from the realm and reach of ordinary folks since the high degree of expertise and specialization it contemplates are beyond their capability. This has a bearing on music and other arts too.

*Ad hoc* temples improvised on streets gather vast crowds of devotees much larger than ancient sanctified temples like those at Thanjavur, Srivilliputtur, Kumbakonam and Kanchipuram! Even so, music-lovers would seem to prefer and relish young voices rather than those of veterans of acknowledged merit. The basic urges and reasons are for experts to consider!

Modern *rasikas* have the benefit of blaring mikes. It would seem that there is emphasized love of new modes of soft, subdued, mellowed rendition in preference to *nabhi, hrt, kanta, rasana* mode.

There is the issue of popularizing Indian music among certain segments of Indian society which have evinced little interest in it all along.

Prof. P. Sambamurthy wrote in 1966, 'Compared to Europe, the percentage of people in India,

possessing musical understanding is at low ebb'. Music has been recommended for inclusion in the syllabus of schools ever since Independence. [A few independent schools have been opened by the Government of Tamil Nadu a year or two back. How they fare is not known.] Young generation is getting attracted towards music other than the classical. Nagaswaram which planted basic urges by its daily or constant presence in marriages and at temples is fast disappearing. Dramas [*terukuthu*], *kalakshepam* etc., which supported classical music are waning. Classical music is in a furious hurry to desert rural areas owing to the migration of the segments which constitute the backbone of its patrons, professionals and *rasikas*. The concentration of classical music in metropolitan towns alone may hamper the growth and the survival of the art.

#### Siksha : Coaching & Training

*'Akhandamanjalaakaaram vyaaptam  
yena charaacharam*

*Tadpadam darsitam yena,*

*tasmai Sri Gurave namah*

[Brhman pervades all and, in fact, forms the whole universe. That Brhman is revealed to me by my Guru, My prostration to Him.]

'Come one and all and sing for the salvation of humanity, the gem-like melodies Tyagaraja has composed containing the essence of *Vedas, Sastras* and *Puranas*'. - Tyagaraja

'Hear Adippayya but do not follow his style'. Sangita Swamy to Syama Sastry.

'If I am reborn, I wish to be your brother', Ayilyam Tirunal Maharajah, Tiruvananthapuram to Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar.

'Follow my style but do not sing like me', Chittoor Subramanya Pillai to Lokanada Sarma.

'Follow my advice but not my practice', Mudicondan Venkatrama Ayyar to R. Vedavalli.

'Learn to appreciate others' music, your music is sure to be appreciated', G. N. Balasubramanian to Trichur Ramachandran.

'Rather, congratulate me in having Newton for a subject', George I of England on becoming King of England, when congratulated.

'Do not pursue two avocations at a time-music and writing stories', Rajamanickam Pillai to his disciple.

Intensive practice has been the order particularly in yester centuries as teaching was mostly oral and there was not much written notes and the like to supplement. There are juicy episodes concerning *gurukulavasa* and ordinary training and practice. Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar himself has written much on his training.

Saint Tyagaraja, in his Gowri Manohari song, *Guruleka*, says that whatever be the merits and qualities, without a *Sad Guru* [not a sad guru, please] it will not be possible for one to acquire knowledge and that the guru alone can protect one with love and the medicine of spiritual initiation and enlightenment to keep the mind free of attachments. In his song *Ni chittamu nischalamu* [*Dhanyasi*], he clarifies that the guru cleanses the mind like soap-nut [*sallaki seed*] which cleanses water and that he is the honey-bee, the sun, the embodiment of auspiciousness and the highest to be attained and qualifies them all stating that he had taken Rama himself as guru!

Of course, the connotation of the institution of guru would seem to have undergone much radical change in concept and coverage in recent decades. The old concept was absolute faith, surrender and reverence to the guru as worthy of absolute compliance along with mother, father and God. Perhaps the implications of that nexus may not have full application or

relevance in all its entirety in the context of West-oriented changed circumstances. Ekalavya was prepared to cut off his vital thumb to satisfy his guru. Could anyone expect a like conduct now? *Sishyas* of old washed clothes, tended cattle, did much domestic work as part of their duties towards their guru but would it not be a futile expectation now? Even royal scions observed the code of conduct as depicted in *Ramayana* and other ancient lore. And it was then, to borrow a commercial term, the teachers' market. Conversely, the *sishya* during the period of his apprenticeship was treated as part of the household of the guru. The ancient Tamil proverb said that the *sishya* is also a son. *Dayayaga viddhayai satrinon oru pitha*. And *Guru Stotram* emphasises the points thus:

*Tvam eva maata cha pita tvam eva,  
Tvam eva bandhuscha sakha tvameva /  
Tvam eva vidya dravinam tvam eva  
Tvam eva sarvam mama devadeva //*

O Lord of Lords! You are my mother and father.

You are my relative and friend.

You are the embodiment of wisdom and wealth.

You are everything to me.]

Pandit Ravi Shankar has written much on his *gurukulavas* which are worthy of being read. Sri Vasudevacharya has recorded specifically winsome details:

My guru [the great Patnam Subramania Ayyar] had two other *sishyas*. My share of the duties was to wash clothes of *guruji* and *gurumata* in the river, wash the copper pots and store drinking water in them, wash *puja* utensils, make the bed for *guruji* and press his feet till he fell asleep. Occasionally I had to take the cattle for grazing. I was to get up and provide *Tambura sruti* for his *sadhaka*, to listen

attentively when he taught others, to be with *guruji* when he composed and go with him to his concerts.

One day, *guruji* confided, "Vasu, don't you think I am not aware of your desire to learn. Do not feel that you have spent all your time in vain. The benefit of careful and constant listening can hardly be exaggerated. I have now taken you around the *praharas* [corridors] of the temple [of music]. All that remains to be done is to take you to the *sanctum sanctorum* and show you the *Mula Vighraha*. That I will do tomorrow!"

### What a day it was for young Vasul

And no wonder he rose to the top. Many others have followed this routine even among existing veterans. That *gurukulavasa* sentimental relationship is inapplicable now when the *guru-sishya* relationship rests mostly on mundane selective and *quid pro quo* basis. This is particularly so, barring some noble exceptions, in all the fields inclusive of language and religion. *Guru dakshina* was once a noble concept which was not governed by contract or agreement. Palghat Mani stood before his guru with a plate with a one-rupee coin and presumably a coconut, some betels and nuts. Can it be contemplated now? It is impossible.

Further the *guru-sishya* relationship was then mostly among males, but now highly competent and qualified women constitute the bulk of apprentices and performers and the soft art is slowly and steadily slipping to their side, as it has a natural right to it. Whether the Parliament is graced by more women legislators or not, the musical field enjoys the presence of a large number of eminent lady musicians including two Bharat Ratnas. In the circumstance, old values have very limited relevance or application. Of course, personal respect, as an inherited valid grounds too and they are well

imbibed virtue of Indian heritage or legacy shall persist in India and continue for long. Present day Vasus, if advised to do domestic chores, are apt to run away not only from the guru but from the field of music itself. One another fact that remains is that *gurukulavasa* of old and the quasi-*gurukulavasa* as it obtained in the old Annamalai University and the Madras Music College did present a rich harvest of veterans. The symposium may have much interest to dilate on this.

### Professional and Cultural:

Prof. P. Sambamurthy significantly classifies musical education as above. In the former, the aim is to train the student to become a professional performer [akin to present-day professional management courses.] Study exclusively relates to achieving distinction on the practical and performing side. In the latter course, study being directed towards cultural value, all topics coming under musicology in addition to the practical course, they are able to interpret and impart a fresh outlook in their career as performers or teachers of music. The first is offered in the academics and conservatoires and the latter in the universities.

### Performer vs Teacher

There are eminent teachers in music and eminent performers and some who are both with or without distinction in either or both. The learned Prof. Sambamurthy has observed,

'Teaching, being one of the noblest professions, happy is the lot of the teacher who imparts knowledge in the noblest of arts and thus does service to the society'.

One may hear dissenting murmurs from different corners, 'happy might have been his lot sitting in the University buildings on the Marina of Madras but not ours!' The dissenting teachers have valid grounds too and they are well



known. The professor refers to the performing artiste who studies the venue, occasion and the grade of the audience, adjusts his programme appropriately and leaves the concert dais taking his fee amidst the applause, earned or conferred as a measure of routine habit. But the teacher 'faces a permanent audience day in and day out, often for years. His repertoire must be extensive and he must be in touch with the latest developments in music and the newest compositions. He must be ready to answer any question any time'.

Tyagaraja, in his song, *Kaddanuvarki* [Todi], stipulates some essential requisites, viz., reduce tendency to sleep for long, tune the Tambura, inculcate a peaceful, devout mind [*santamu lekha, soukhyama ledu*], ensure *suswara* etc. But these are mandatory for those in pursuit of music with bhakti [nadopasana]. Music and spiritual were a composite, single pursuit for those contemplated by Tyagaraja. Many a student does follow the guidelines even now out of respect and love for the guru and for the art. The aims and goals of most of the present practitioners may be different. It may not be feasible to follow the golden practice of the past in conditions prevailing now. The desirability of ensuring a quasi-gurukula atmosphere, duration, syllabus and other factors concerning collegiate and university courses are all points which are to engage the attention of distinguished participants. May their wise counsels find speedy acceptance.

#### Siddhars and Music:

Music [like sugar-coated tablets] has been the fruitful medium for presenting and advocating philosophic truths. Tyagaraja excels in it and many other bards like Purandaradasa, Kabir, Ramadasa etc., have done the same with good results. How realized souls

[Siddhars] too had chosen to communicate their remarkable findings in the realm of religion and philosophy through songs calls for brief mention here. Here is a specimen song of Kudambai Siddhar often heard at concerts and lectures:

*Mangaipal undu  
Malai mel irupporoku  
Tengai pal edukkadi - Kudambai  
Tengai pal edukkadi*

This song, superficially considered, means, 'To those who have drunk the juice of mango and taken abode on mountains, where is the need for coconut juice?' This is palpably too absurd to come from a realized soul and sung for centuries. Different versions are given on the meaning which do not commend themselves. In my view it is,

*Maangaai=very big unripe fruit or vegetable;  
[ma = big]  
Tenguipal=coconut juice or milk, or toddy.  
[Having drunk deep the Milk of Wisdom][Jnanapal] and reached the Peak of Realization, where is the need for mundane things like coconut juice?]*

#### OR

*[Having consumed the blissful amrit of Devi Parvati][Mangaipal - Mangai=Lady-Parvati] and got seated on the highest pedestal, will anyone aspire for base coconut juice/ This hasa reference to the suckling of baby Tirujnanasambhandar.]*

The songs of Siddhars are apparently in lucid, colloquial lyric, very simple and plain but the inner content, meaning and message are baffling indeed. The subtle philosophic meaning of songs such as these is not clear and eludes one but numerous songs are in currency for long. They provide a mine of rich philosophic content for research. This is mentioned here just to highlight the fact that music lends itself to propagate and publicise many and how philosophy comes into play effortlessly in, and providing food to music.

## SRI SHANMUKHANANDA FINE ARTS

&

### SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, Mumbai-400 022.  
Phones : 407 88 88 / 403 02 13 / 401 51 64 / Fax : 409 22 11

E-Mail : shanmugananda@hotmail.com  
Website : www.shanmukhananda.org.in

#### Magazine Committee 2001 -2002 Ex-Officio Members

**President**  
Shri V. Shankar

**Vice - Presidents**  
Shri B. G. Deshmukh  
Shri Sadanand Shetty

**Hon. Secretaries**  
Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury  
Shri V. Rangaraj

**Hon. Treasurer**  
Shri R. R. Rao

**Convenor**  
Shri S. Seshadri

#### Members

Shri Jayaram Mani  
Smt. Kalyani Sharma  
Shri K. V. Ramachandran

Dr. Sulochana Rajendran  
Smt. Viji Iyengar  
Shri N. Hariharan

#### Editorial Advisory Board

Dr. Semmangudi R. Srinivasa Iyer  
Shri T. S. Parthasarathy  
Shri Laigudi Jayaraman  
Shri H. K. Ranganath

Shri T. N. Krishnan  
Shri T. K. Mahalingam Pillai  
Shri K. S. Mahadevan  
Shri Umayalpuram Sivaraman

**Hon. Editor**  
Dr. (Smt.) Sulochana Rajendran